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strength for there the Bambara place the poles of attraction which, in the universe, uphold all bodies. It is said: "All bodies accept the force of attraction of the four angles," fari be bi sõ seleke nuni mana barika la.

which determined "the space of yo in its own thought," is expressed by the number 22: "yo, darkness of creation, in the depth of the secret space of night, master of the foundation of the 22 rotations, great bearer of vibration, great builder of the marrow of bones (1).

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1. yo dali dyibi, ɲu kene gundo tyema, munumunu mu tani fla siki ba, yere done ba, kolow nye kono dlaba, kono being the ancient term for marrow.

This prayer is recited in honor of yo when a woman's pregnancy is first noticed; it is also recited at eclipses of the sun.

These 22 spirals stirred up all that yo contained in spirit; nugu, "entrails, intestines," which carried all things and man within itself; yafã, "seed of the air," which placed the voids in all /7/ parts of space"; fayã, "seed of the wind"; sani, "seed of water"; yerẽ, "seed of fire"; yelẽgu, "seed of earthly matter" (2). The rotations of yo

2. fayã, sani, yerẽ (in ancient language), and yelẽgu were at the origin of the four elements, air, water, fire and earth, all of which did not yet exist but were to appear later.

The seven elements composing yo are represented by signs, reproduced in Figure 1 (1 to 7).

put them in order and kept them under the force of attraction (mana). In other words, carried away by this whirlwind, both magnetic and creative, the elements became organized, one in relation to the other; in this way the 22 terms of the universe, as thought out by yo, were determined, these terms are also the 22 periods of its thought:

772 The seven bõnuana summarize the general characteristics of beings
80 and things:
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1. keleñã, unity;
2. makari, pity, mercy;
3. mako, necessity;
4. sinaya, aggression, jealousy;
5. fadena, rivalry;
6. maloya, shame;
7. sia, race, species, stock.

The twelve bangini, which follow, determine the qualities and destinies of the person:

1. ma ye ma ye, literally: a person is a person; gifts, possibilities of each, propositions and dispositions.
2. mako, mutual aid, simplicity, dignity, courtesy, wisdom.
3. sebaya, power, domination.
4. dyuguya, maliciousness, vulgarity, ferocity, difficulties.
5. kunanguya, bad luck, bad destiny, ill nature.
6. sira, road, guide, obedience, discipline.
7. ɲafola, wealth, health, fertility.
8. adamadeñã, brotherhood, humanity, liberty, kindness.
9. dahirime, food, material possessions.
10. saya, death, illness, infirmities, madness.
/13/ 11. ɲu, night, light and dark, secret, witchcraft.
12. kle, day, sun; all the boli altars of the Bambara.

The three jijini are respectively:

1. kun, the head that thought out the world.
2. ba, the womb that formed it.
3. fo, the word that created it.

772 Knowledge, fã̂, was born of three foundations which finally became
773 detached from the spirit (1). Knowledge opened up, divided, and

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1. The following prayer, relating to the fã̂, is sometimes recited: fango, ma dua, ma bo, fẽ̂ mbina, fẽ̂ nkumba, fẽ̂ ndaba, fẽ̂ semba, wolo tigi ye nye, djiri tigi ye nye, panve bwora na. O bwora mi, o nya nyimi senge do. Ntigi ye yereyere ye, ka bo miri kono, miri dane sandyi.

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"Road of knowledge, I am not small, I am not big. A thing arrives, a thing with a large head, a large mouth, a large foot. I am the master of fertility; I am the master of trees. Where does it come from? It comes from the weariness of my seed. My master is the vibration, out of which came the spirit, the rain of which fertilizes."

772 773 contributed to the building of the visible world, especially engendering particles, moõ moõo, which entered into the composition of the earth, and a radiance, noro, used for the formation of the sky.

At the same time, the spirit let fall upon the earth (still in the process of formation) a heavy object in the form of a globule, kulu, which was later named pemba (1). Pemba, moving as a whirlwind to

1. From fẽ, thing and ba, big.

the four cardinal points (south, west, east, and north), received twelve of the elements issued from the spirit. Then, with the help of the particles that came out of fã, he modeled lumps and mounds which gave shape to the earth.

But in the course of rising, the spirit had thrown upwards that which was later called fãro (2). Faro, who was then no more than vibration,

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2. The Bambara use either faro or fãro, from fa (creation) or fã (knowledge) in the ancient language. This double etymology indicates the closeness in their minds between the concepts of creation and knowledge (see p. 17). The suffix ro expresses the idea of a whole, a totality. Another etymology has been suggested by S. de Ganay, in Notes sur la théodicée bambara, p. 196. "... the words Fané (the name of a family of blacksmiths), Faro, fan (force), fara (stone), and fari (body) all have the same origin. Faro is the secret name of stone." This etymology

778 understandable that the strength of the large pembele should be preserved intact since it represents the world. No ritual concerning it is celebrated alone by the man in charge without the presence of a council of elders. Its four corners can be scraped only under worthwhile circumstances for, according to the informant, the god pembele will not tolerate his being used for trifles. As the corners are gradually scraped off and consequently the nyama contained in these corners is reduced, the earth becomes worn out. And if the earth should lose its nyama, all would be empty of its substance; the millet would still grow but its stalk would yield no grain... women would bear no children, no longer having any nyama. Bereft of strength, people would no longer be able to fight. The earth would subsist, but would be sterile" (1).

1. S. de Ganay, op. cit., p. 200.

The Balanza

824 The tree balanza, the plant form of Pemba's metamorphosis, vanquished by Faro, is no longer worshipped by men. However, the Bambara's attitude towards it and certain ritual gestures of which it is /38/ sometimes the object, recall the time when, after having spread its domination over all creation, it introduced death to the human species.

[761] In certain settlements, the belief is that whoever rests in its shade dies, the tree having taken his dya. In others, women still make it [782] offerings of karite oil, despite advice from men who have informed them of its inefficacy. They lie at its base, simulating illness, agony, and then death to recall the painful events that have brought them to men; finally they touch the ground successively with each of their four principal articulations as a sign of submission, before smearing the tree trunk with the oil they have brought. In still others, [843] in order to recall that births used to take place near the tree, pregnant women are presented by their husbands to the tree to each childbirth.

The fields surrounding the settlements in the region of Ségou are covered profusely with balanza. The device of Ségou, which tells of the history of the town, enumerates the names of the trees planted at the time of its founding. This device also mentions kokuruni (literally, little humped back), the balanza of Banankoroni (pl. I, a),

The second, dyi ble "red water," is Faro's copper, a reflection of koblenkaba or "red sky." It is similarly the seat of the spirit's warlike or punitive activities. Water of wrath and vengeful action, it drowns the guilty. Through it, Faro strikes the bodies and health of those who do not recognize his dominion.

Faro prefers to sojourn in the dyi fi, "black water," where he keeps his secrets. It is to this water that one prays to seek grace. It is from the dyi fi that the twelve future waters will flow.

Calm and felicity reign in the dyi sumane, "cold water," where the fish live. The dya of earthly bwings are preserved in it.

While Faro drowns those he punishes in the dyi ble, it is in the madũ (literally, person, to eat) that their bodies rot or become the prey of fish.

The sixth category of water, kosira (literally, thing of fear) is a jail. In it Faro temporarily places all that comes under his domination.

The seventh water, dyi wolõflã, corresponds to the seventh heaven.

In the Niger, the places inhabited by Faro bear the general name of faro tyin. These are mostly deep depressions, well known to the shore dwellers, particularly the Bozo. /46/ Sometimes a consecrated stone, placed on the shore, receives the sacrifices offered to the spirit.

The most celebrated is a place called Souko, located upstream from Koulikoro near the village of Kayo. The local spirit engendered all that now lives in the river. Because of this he is worshipped by all Bozo and Somono fishermen, who used to send delegations to the annual sacrifice that took place during the dry season.

The Faro of Ségou lives in the Faka, a deep hole located close to the right bank, facing the town. Legend has it that the Faka is extended by tunnels: one links the river to the Bani while the other opens out at Dya and was used by the founders of the settlement in mythical times.

The Faka is placed under the guardianship of a crocodile to which each year the inhabitants offered victims. At the bottom of the hole there is a fat blind scaleless polyo, which the fishermen always return to the water if they catch it in their nets "because it is Faro's gate-keeper." In olden times, a flat stone upon which were traced a representation of Faro and black dots equal in number to the inhabitants of Ségou was visible in the deepest part of the waters. On this occasion an albino was sacrificed (by slitting his throat) and the first fruits of the harvest were offered to the spirit.

776 On market day, a gourd filled with river water, called fle ndinye
823 faro, is placed close to the shore where the canoes land. To drink a
782 mouthful of this water is equivalent to a sacrifice to the spirit. The drinker gives a cowrie as alms to the beggar who drew the water, for "never can [Faro's] water be bought or sold" (1).

1. Ma ti dyi fere ma ti dyi sã.
See pl. II, b.

At Sama, the faro tyin is a kind of natural corridor located amidst the rocks bordering and overhanging the left bank of the river.

[825] The finches nesting there warn the boatmen of the place's sanctity by flying off; the boatmen then stop to pray. In passing, they throw an offering and those who have broken taboos purify themselves by washing. Each shows the spirit all that he carries with him. Two nearby trees, faro sõndyiri or "trees of Faro's sacrifice," are used to tie up the white bulls at twilight. The following day, they are thrown alive into the river with millet mash and cola nuts. At the bottom of the passage, on a fairly smooth surface, the image of Faro described above was drawn each year in the course of the ceremony celebrated by the society of the Komo.

/47/ Faro also haunts ponds and wells. In the village of Nango a natural well was revealed to a hunter by a white ram which appeared out of a thicket. The village was built after the discovery of the water hole where the inhabitants now worship the spirit.

In the village of Siyango, the water of the well in which Faro resides is tabooed, the site of the well being the seat of all the religious ceremonies of the villagers. There the newborn are presented, and deaths and marriages announced. The sick are treated by being [755] made to drink the well water and wash in it. From his herd, each person offers every year an animal which is thrown alive into the pit. [681] Finally, those condemned to death are executed by drowning in the same spot.

Faro's Auxiliaries

776 Faro has placed spirits as his representatives in the skies, in space,
773 on earth, in the trees, and in the rocks of the mountains. They see

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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Because of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

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The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

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It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

1:Dieterlen--79 E-5 (1946-1949) 1951 FA8 Bambara FA8
Bozo MS6

2. See p. 33, n. 4.

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In many cases, this origin enables them to intervene with the spirit, where others are helpless. Born as twins of the master of the waters, the Bozo never suffered the contamination caused by Mousso Koroni which affects all other men. Because of this fact it is possible for them to establish communication with the spirit at the bottom of ponds or in the river and to seek out the bodies of those drowned. The fishing rights conferred on them by Faro were never contested by the conquerors who settled on the shore of the Niger during the historic period.

Numerous articles or essays have already been published on the Bozo. Their language and fishing techniques have been studied. However, inquiries into their religion and the image they have of themselves prove very difficult. This is caused, on the one hand, by their apparent conversion to Islam and, on the other, by their reticence in discussing their traditional system. Such a contribution, however, will be indispensable to scholarship in the study of certain aspects of Sudanese metaphysics, particularly that of the Bambara and the Dogon. The myths of both groups mention the apparition of the Bozo on earth as coinciding with the beginning of /51/ Faro's actions which, in turn, coincides with the development of techniques among the Bambara, and with the "third word" of the Dogon (1).

1. See M. Griaule, Dieu d'eau.

In addition, the "joking relationships" which they maintain with the Dogon and which go back to the origin of a whole system of tribal and intertribal alliances clearly indicate the importance of the symbolic role conferred upon them (2).

2. See p. 119, n. 1.

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Whenever he feels the need, Faro carries women and young girls off to his watery home. Many disappearances in the course of river crossings by canoe are attributed to him.

In olden times, each year a young virgin, chosen for her beauty by the griot of the village, became the wife and servant of Faro. In most cases she was willing and proud to become his eternal companion. On a designated day, wearing her finest jewelry, she was

brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/ Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 773 At death, he takes back the spiritual principles of the diseased and preserves them in water so as to reintegrate them into another body, thus using forces which are eternally reusable. The product of the "shedding" (mana or folo) of souls which remain on the altars is for him in a way of constantly verifying the account of those living and dead who are entrusted to him.

On earth, men are indebted to him for all they possess. He gave them language, an expression of thought, and taught them its usage, having warned them against the misuse and evil use of words.

The techniques of survival, another expression of "Faro's words," so necessary to their lives since they have to provide the means for their existence, were revealed to them by the spirit. He helped them with his sovereign power, either by directly providing them with new tools, or by inspiring some of them to develop new techniques by putting to use observed facts. In this way, he gave the Bozo fishing nets which enabled them to catch the first recorded animal food, the fish; likewise, he encouraged among the Bambara the discovery of weaving through observing the spider's web.

He also gave men certain seeds which became the origin of farming, such as cotton and fonio, both of them being known before millet and the other cereals.

As proprietor of cowrie shells and metals, he is the master of wealth, distributing it as he pleases. Thus, one who owns precious [82] metal is responsible to Faro for it and owes him a part of one's earnings. For this reason many offerings are made by throwing gold or copper into the river.

776 241 Faro's deed is essential where the Bambara's main activity, agricultural work, is concerned. Every man with dignity and nobility must cultivate the earth in order to honor Faro. Each stroke of the hoe is a wound inflicted upon the earth and a punishment for its impurity. Each stroke of the hoe humiliates Mousso Koroni and purifies the earth. Faro watches over the soul and the vital force of the seeds. Only he can provide rain necessary to germination, for rain contains the soul, (ni) of the cereal grains as does the water of ponds and streams which one collects in case of drought.

776 774 241 Millet receives its soul as soon as it gets the humidity of the earth, and from that time on, it accompanies the various stages of germination with utterances which, at the beginning of the world, could be heard. As soon as /54/ it has received the rain, the seed splits and says: "My place is assigned." Then the sprout comes out of the earth

776 with the words: "May I be protected." Finally the growth of the stem
774 is accompanied by a third utterance: "May I be obeyed" (1). It pre-
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1. These are the three formula:
ndyora, nga kolosi, nga bunye.

serves its soul until full maturity, that is, the moment is is harvested. When the harvester's blade cuts the spike or the cluster, the plant sends its soul into Faro's realm with these words: "Iron is forbidden my grain; soul, go away to the house of water" (2). Thus deprived

2. Neke ye nkise tne ye, ni, ta dyi so la.

of its soul, the millet becomes suitable for eating and it says: "If I were not dead, I could not be eaten; my breed cannot be lost: whether or not I am eaten, nothing can reduce me for my soul is in water" (3).

3. Ni ná sale te nti dũ, n šia tise ka tunu,
ndunaw ma dũn wo, fẽ te bwona, ni be dyi la.

776 Many agrarian rituals are celebrated in order to assure Faro's pro-
241 tection. The high quality of the first fruits of the harvest offered to him indicates the importance of his role. It is in fact a payment made to him for the past harvest and in anticipation of the harvest to come.

776 He is also the guardian of the artisan's skill. The first object forged by the young blacksmith and the first spindle of thread woven by the young weaver are brought to him. Through this gesture, the individual entrusts him with both his work and his manual dexterity. After Faro has seen the work, he does not let the worker forget what he has learned and will help him perfect his skill.

Faro is a judge. Those who break the rules he has made are the object of his righteous wrath: those who are drowned or struck by lightning are always persons who have broken a taboo. Men submit most difficult cases to him as a last resort. Through the intermediary of the agents of different rituals such as the intermediary of the diviners, he answers requests and "settles the words." Most prayers
776 are addressed to him and in many cases the invocations end with his
782 name. He is omnipresent, invoked everywhere, and the seat of his power, as of all others, is the seventh heaven, to which the Bambara

address the following: "Seventh heaven, you are large, you are long; your west is red; your east is white; your north is great; your south is black; seventh heaven, you are the king of seats among all seats, you are the great generator of the power of all powers, you are the great discoverer of all secrets, you are the source of all /55/ fortunes, you are the place where the common weal may not be destroyed; source of all things, deliver me from sin" (1).

1. Wolo flã̃ kaba, i ka bo, i ka dyã̃, i kle bi ka ble, i koro ka dye, i baba ka bo, i bani ka fi; wolo flã̃ kaba, siki yoro u la sikiyoro masa, fanga u la fanga ba sindi, gundow be ladyele fara be, nafolo be ladyele boyoro, dyɛ̃ wari dũ bali yoro; ko be boyoro, hake tonye.

This prayer is recited by the head of the family during childbirth, a grave illness, or a death. It was also used during rituals of the enthronement of kings or chiefs.

Pemba and Faro, the complementary principles, were both born of the spirit, miri, at the beginning of the universe. In considering the psychological aspects of their symbolic roles, one can understand why, despite the antecedence of Pemba's role, from time to time the Bambara say that "Faro is the eldest." For he represents, in the human microcosm, the will and wisdom capable of controlling the propulsion of sexual instinct as symbolized by the prolificness of the balanza as well as the violence and disorder of the emotions as expressed in Mousso Koroni's vertiginous chthonian voyage and her madness. The antithesis of the sexes, realized in the myth by the bodily separation of Pemba and Mousso Koroni, and their disagreements and quarrels which are the origin of all cosmic disorders, are compensated for by harmonious agreement and union, as established by Faro in his androgynous state. Faro is the dual vibration which, from then on, orders the universe; he is reason and moderation opposed to the overwhelming force of the balanza; he is the light of the spirit which triumphs over darkness and primordial gropings.

831 lines or dots depending upon the sex of those who used them. Thus,
801 women marked their spindles with four lines whereas men twisted three threads on their shuttles.

826 On the metaphysical level, man's body, "the seed of the world," is identified with the cereal grain. The Bambara separate cereal
824 grains into seven parts, corresponding to a division of the human
812 organs into seven groups (1). Man and grain are one and identical in

1. The divisions of the grain are as follows: kungu, "little beard of millet," involucre; fara dye, "white bark," glume and glumales; fara fi, "black bark," bran and protein aceous bark; fara mugu, "farinaceous bark" (which corresponds to a milky diastatic zone); mugu dunta, "flour for eating," starch; kolo dye, "white bone," embryo; kise de, "son of grain," the micropyle from which the rootlet issues at the time of germination. The classification of organs in relation to these divisions is under study. We thank M. Pitot of the Institut Français d'Afrique Noire for the identification of the parts of the grain corresponding to the native divisions. In certain villages, grains undergo a process of hulling and the determined elements only are used in the making up of the ritually offered millet mash.

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their substance. On the other hand, the basic foods, that is, the eight principal cereals, are symbolically present in the collarbones (kolo kalanjiri, or ka kolo). Man carries within him his subsistance, and its location reflects the person's general condition (2). As proof

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2. See p. 53, n. 2.

of /72/ man's spiritual integrity, these grains leave him when he is in a state of impurity. He is then drained of his substance and subsistence. Thepurpose of purification is to reestablish this wholeness.

812 Moreover, the bonds which unite the whole person, body and
561 spiritual principles, to the cosmos, are made clear by the fact that

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
564 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
783 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the world impure children who will never have a right to their father's barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the

2. See p. 52.

beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

826 [833] Faro's wrath—a fact which constitutes a serious breaking of taboo. The consequence of this is to coalesce in the maternal womb the twins originally granted to the woman by Faro and to decolorize the skin of the being thus formed. Because of this fact, the albino, the embodiment of twins, does not inherit the spiritual princples of a deceased person and is also a new being given to men by Faro. But the impurity he has acquired increases tenfold his tere and his wanzo, which are so active that the circumciser must sacrifice on his own [304] personal altars before performing the operation. From the ambivalence of the albino, originally of the same essence as Faro but fallen because of the impurity transmitted by his parents, stem various customs and representations. (1).

1. This ambivalence is also at the root of the belief that the albino is a being formerly provided with wings and able to fly (see p. 68, a quality he lost after his contact with the impure soil.

826 778 His body is believed to be endowed with special powers. The person who owns his skull will have a numerous family and prosperity; his hair brings wealth; the marrow of his bones provides gold and copper. If he is made to sit at a place where bones are buried, whatever one asks for is granted. His excrements, mixed with seed, have the effect of increasing the harvest for the year.

826 782 Because of the value attributed to the albino he is a choice victim for the sacrifices to Faro. His nyama is such that he can be sacrificed without prayer, the act itself constituting an efficacious invocation. Lacking living albinos, men often tried to appropriate the remains of a buried body.

/89/ Chapter 4

SACRIFICE AND THE ALTAR

782 To call upon spiritual forces and to influence them, the Bambara use prayer, offering, and sacrifice. They perform oral and manual

782 rites in all places at all times. They pray to the sky, to the cardinal points, and to the spirits; they sacrifice on rocks, on the earth, on trees, in water holes, as well as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries, or located in private or public places. Every circumcised adult, father of a family, or owner of a house and arable land can be a sacrificer whose qualification is underscored by the red stain which sometimes adorns the walls of the main room of his house (1).

1. See pp. 171ff.

To the uninformed observer these rituals cover a great network of apparently unrelated beliefs. But actually it is otherwise. The rituals stimulate definite movements of forces which are integrated with those of the world.

Without trying to give a general picture of the manners, the times, and the places peculiar to Bambara rites, it is nevertheless important to study apart one of the most important mechanisms, namely the blood sacrifice. It constitutes the framework for the rituals and brings into play the principles and elements composing the living being (see preceding chapter), for it must be noted that the first sacrifices stated in the myth were human sacrifices.

A sacrifice takes place when the blood of the victim runs over a substance or an object containing the force of a supernatural power or of an ancestor. The words of the prayer pronounced during the immolation dedicate the victim to the power that comes to nourish itself on the blood according to popular belief. At the same time, they direct the life forces which escape from the body. The soul, ni, is channeled by the altar and will be kept there until resurrection. Its nyama, which gains in power as /90/ the agony is prolonged, is also retained by the altar whose strength it increases. The victim is thus completely emptied of its spiritual principles for "all the nyama are in the blood" (2) which it abandons.

2. Nyama be bi dyoli la.

782 826 In all cases, the sacrifice represents an exchange: the sacrificer receives in return a part of the strength of the one whom he supplants (3). The blood is the carrier of an active, dangerous element left on

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3. The mechanism of blood sacrifice among the Bambara is comparable to that observed among the Dogon and described by M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice dogon (Soudan Français) /Remarks on the Mechanism of Dogon Sacrifice (French Sudan)/," Journal de la Société des Africanistes. Vol. 10, 1940, pp. 127 ff.

the altar. At the time men gave the balanza their blood, they would let it dry and then, licking the trunk with their tongue, would reclaim it after it was rid of the element constituting the offering. All their active forces passed into the tree and a substance almost totally lacking in vitality was returned to them.

782 The blood sacrifices which were originally instituted on the trunk of the balanza are actually performed in the most varied sites: earth, trees, ponds, wells, etc. Moreover, as the Bambara developed their technology, they would sacrifice on those objects, utensils, or contrivances which they discovered or invented such as the forge and its tools, the loom, and agricultural implements.

782 The Bambara also have altars which may be classified into three categories:

778 1. The wood stumps called pembele, which represent Pemba. Many heads of families or of religious societies keep one of these (1).

1. See p. 77 for a description of the pembele altars.

A unique sanctuary at Massala is a pilgrimage center for Bambara from all regions who come in great numbers to take part in the annual sacrifice. Besides pembele, it contains two large pots, da, covered with sacrificial blood, which give the sanctuary its name. It is in this place that ordeals are executed, judicial questions settled, and serious illnesses treated.

2. The altars, made of stones crudely cut and occasionally engraved, have their origin in a mythical stone, issued out of the seventh part of the earth, and situated under the mound where Faro's female twins were born. Having a red color, it was itself a symbol of sacrifice. It divided itself and gave birth to all other sacrificial stones (Fig. 5 and Pl. V. b).

782 /91/ Actually the altars from the region of Ségou originate mostly
778 in Toko, a settlement situated to the south of the town where the king's
326 blacksmiths lived. The ancestor of these blacksmiths is buried in the rocks which border Toko and from which the stones used as altar are

Fig. 5.—Stone altar, fara ba, of Banankoroni, consecrated to ancestors. It is stuck into the ground above the skull and bones of an albino, hoes, and a circumcision knife. The ritual drawing traced during the ceremonies of the renewal of the year represents the torches and the whips of the Kworè, 3 men and 4 women, which recall the number 7, image of the creation (Informant's drawing).

[532 769]

carved. If a village chief wants to obtain one he sends a delegate to Toko. This emissary receives from the blacksmith the stone appropriate to the function of the altar and the quality of the person

782 778 [326] requesting it. Thus, a black stone is given to those who have broken a /92/ taboo, a stone of two colors to a stranger, and the red stone "rounded and polished by the ancestors" to those whom one wishes to honor.

The stone altars which are innumerable (both private and public ones) generally represent the ancestors. When they are placed in the fields they receive the sacrifices offered in their name for helping the crops. At the intersection of narrow roads and on the public square, they assure the stability of ancestral customs.

3. The Bambara also sacrifice on manufactured objects which bear the general name of boli (literally, to run) and which are the equivalent of the altars although they are of an entirely different nature than the preceding ones. Their origin is different. To the initiates they originate in the twelfth bangini which gave birth to the day (see pp. 30-31). In the shape of "globules" they were released in space by Faro as he descended to the earth; they were collected by the spirits of the air and of the ground into which some of them penetrated, and were later given to men (1).

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1. The popular belief has it that the eight principal boli of the Bambara were brought back from Mecca by the famous Makanta Djigui, a personage whose name is cited in numerous prayers (particularly in the course of the ceremonies of the Komo).
L. Tauxier attributes this tradition to Islam influence under the reign of Soundiata's successor, Malinké Kankan Moussa, who made the pilgrimage to Mecca in 1324 (La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3).

The name of Makanta Djigui is cited in the device (burudyu) of the Komo: the chiefs of this important society carry their altars each year to the shore of the Niger near the village of Tikko on the spot where the historical canoe which transported him is said to have sunk.

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It is possible that this figure played the role of a religious legislator by codifying certain beliefs and founding associations around the boli which, according to qualified informants, existed before his intervention. On this point see also L. Tauxier, La Religion bambara, p. 287, n. 3.

The versions of the voyage of Makanta Djigui, which the natives readily tell, are innumerable. See the Abbé Henry, L'Âme d'un peuple africain: les Bambara /The Soul of an African People: The Bambara/, pp. 131-133: Ch. Monteil, Les Bambara du Ségou et du Kaarta /The Bambara of Ségou and of Kaarta/, p. 170; D. Traore, Makanta Djigui, fondateur de la magie soudanaise /Makanta Djigui, Founder of Sudanese Magic/, pp. 23-25.

We have collected two versions of this episode, which we do not feel useful for presentation in this study.

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The boli, also called nyana, are made with the most diverse materials: hyena tails, peppers, honey, coal, precious metals, parts of the body. Each element has its value, and its use is determined by its place in the categories: the time of its manufacture is also important. But whatever its composition, each boli, whose name expresses the universal movement of things, is a combination of elements representing the parts of the universe (1). /93/ It is,

1. At the present stage of this investigation the classification by categories of materials or elements composing the Bambara universe has only been outlined. It is only after the completion of this study that the exact role given the elements composing the boli will become clear and that the problem of the origin of these altars can be considered.

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therefore, the symbol of the universe and the receptacle of the forces which animate it. These forces, already very powerful at the time the boli is made, are constantly kept up, increased by the additions received in the course of the blood sacrifices of which the boli is the object. It becomes a concentration of forces, which gives back in proportion to that which it receives and of which the owner is the first beneficiary.

A boli is also an intermediate agent, permitting one to reach a supernatural power—an ancestor or a living being who impregnates it with strength by coming to consume the offering over it. Through the spilled blood, this strength reenters the victim as well as the sacrificer if he partakes of it.

Therefore a boli contains:

A part of the soul (ni) and the force (nyama) of the being to whom it is consecrated.

The ni and the nyama of the victims offered to it.

The nyama of individuals who, having broken the taboos dictated by the divinity, have died as a result.

The Bambara differentiate two kinds of boli: the most numerous, whose power is relatively benign, called soni (literally, to give little); and those which contrariwise are charged with powerful, truly dangerous forces, called saraka (1). The latter, by their power

1. The čuafebla is a soni; the mbe ndyugu ka is a saraka (see pp. 175 and 176).

alone, supposedly kill the victims offered them without making it necessary to cut the victim's throat. It suffices to present to them the victims while reciting an appropriate prayer to make the victims die. It is then said that the "boli has made the blood come out" and this death is equivalent to a blood sacrifice (2). These boli also

2. If the victim does not die fast enough, the person offering sacrifice may "insult" the altar to force it to act.

attack those whom a person has vowed to persecute.

It is said that a boli "is hot and has a dry throat" and that is why occasionally the ritual includes collecting the blood in a gourd in which [the boli] is allowed to soak.

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

778 The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
782 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
784 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those responsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners. The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies, thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

782 The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
787 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

782 As an example we will summarize below the ritual killing of albinos as it was practiced under the royalty. This underlines the mystical value of the victim and is an excellent example of the mechanism inherent in sacrifice; it brings out the ritual value of the details on each of which the Bambara place particular emphasis. Finally, it confirms the value and symbolism of different parts of the body as described in the preceding chapter.

782 /95/ The kings of Ségou were formerly provided with albinos by a 526 man from the village of Pelengena who kept them prisoners and set them aside for this purpose. But this man exploited them by shaving their hair and selling it to the chiefs of neighboring villages as symbols of the men whom, sooner or later, they could reckon to have under their domination. The chief, having counted his subjects, war prisoners held as slaves as well as captives received as tribute, would prepare as many small sticks as there were men; then he would mix up these sticks with the hair and bury them all in the wall over the sill of the entrance to his home. The hair is supposed to represent beforehand an increase in the subjects of his domain and to help bring in the taxes.

But the albinos themselves were kept for the king who sacrificed them to Faro in cases involving the affairs of the kingdom.

1. When the king found himself in difficulties of an administrative nature, the victim was cut in half through the middle of the body at the level of the abdomen by means of a rope of the da fiber (1): his [283 824]

1. Hibiscus. The nyama fiber was considered impure and could not be used for the albino.

cries, gestures, and excrement were considered the vehicles of a nyama which "would eliminate the difficulty encountered by the king." No one was supposed to hear his cries which were not intended for human ears but for Faro, to whom suffering was also due. The king, above all, should not hear the screams under penalty of failing in his enterprise, and yet he had to be present at the torture and watch it with complete detachment.

The lower half of the victim's body was Faro's due. It was carried to the Niger by three men if the victim was a male, or by four if it was a female. One of them carried the body on his head.

782 826 While keeping his eyes and his left hand closed, he walked without touching the ground with his toes in order to respect "the soul of that which he carried (1). At the edge of the river, the joints were broken,

1. To touch the ground with one's toes amounted to putting the soul of the victim's body in contact with the earth's impurity (see p. 102).

the marrow extracted and poured into the water. After placing their toes on the body, to "give a part of their soul to Faro," the men deposited it gently in the river, into which it sank while they loudly proclaimed the reason for their action. When they returned to their master, they brought him the spirit's gratitude and a little water from the river, which was poured over the royal seat (2).

2. This offering was called nasi, "well-being."

/96/ The upper part of the victim's body was the king's and used for the needs of the state. The tõdyõ first blew into the mouth of the tortured victim so that the "air, in coming out, would take all his words to Faro." Then they buried his head under the king's throne and danced to the rhythm of drums.

[726 789] In case of war, the blood which had spilled during the sacrifice was collected by the tõdyõ and dried in the sun; then the residue was carried away and before the assault was thrown in the direction of the town to be attacked. The king who advanced with his army found, according to the formula, "his sacrifice before him" (saraka bla fĩe).

782 826 789 2. In case the king was short of funds, the killing took place towards the west and was performed by sticking a bamboo stick into the throat of the victim so that blood would run over the cowrie shells which the king had earned himself "with his own sweat." Thus consecrated, the cowries "attracted gold, silver, and copper to the royal treasury."

The head was placed under the throne. The chest and lungs were dried, reduced to powder, and preserved in a bag which the king kept. When he received his tax-payers, he smeared his face and mouth with this powder, thus forcing the visitor to give. He rubbed his body with it before going to war, causing the warriors to say:

782 826 789 "To see the king is to see gold" (1).

1. Fama yele ye sanu yele ye.

He gave some of it to his wives and children who put it in their drinks in order "to inherit his place and his goods." This powder was offered at each sacrifice to Faro in order to fertilize the kingdom.

782 826 266 3. When a family was plagued by numerous deaths, they asked the king to authorize the sacrifice of an albino whom he furnished himself. The victim's tongue was dried, pounded to powder, seasoned with pepper, and eaten by the father of the family to permit him to "reclaim the words and the nyama of the deceased." The nose was swallowed by the mother so that she might "reclaim the breath of the dead children." The father then ate the broiled eyes to "preserve lost sights." The dried ears were hung above the sill of the entrance "so that death, upon hearing the funeral wails, might not return." The skull was retained as a token and buried in the courtyard; a wooden stick marked the burial place. The rest of the body was thrown into the Niger, "for an ordinary man does not have the right to keep that which is reserved for the king."

782 826 622 If the king permitted it, chiefs of the important villages /97/ also placed the body of an albino under their seats "in order that their authority be solid and enduring" (2).

2. Sometimes the sum total of the taxes raised in a village were given the parents of an albino in exchange for the child. Those who could not obtain a victim used an animal bone as a substitute and performed the ritual as though it were an albino. Regarding the chief's seat, see p. 178.

782 826 In certain serious cases, the albino was sacrificed on the altar of Komo. This sacrifice was accomplished in silence for "a prayer unknown to the person sacrificing is in the blood of the albino" who is powerful enough to act without words.

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286 "This," he said, "will be useful to you later as clothing." Men first made skirts of leaves and fibers which they used as loincloth. Then they sent their women to sing and give thanks to the spirit. When they had sown and harvested, they placed the cotton on the crossroads as a gesture of homage (1). The spirit then taught the wife of a farmer,

1. This custom is still observed today.

who used to come and greet him everyday at noon. One day she saw at the crossroads a bird whose name means "little bird who spins the cotton of God" (ala ka kwori parata kono ni). It held white fibers in its beak, pulled them out with its feet, and rolled the thread thus obtained around the body with its wings. "Watch the bird," said the spirit. "In this way he spins and weaves in the sky in order to protect his eggs. Cotton should be used in this way. Your death is near. Begin work from tomorrow on this little stick," he added, pointing to a spindle, "and teach the women of your family and the children."

The woman first spun awkwardly and went down to the river to show Faro her work and to ask for help. A fish came out of the water and gave her a spindle whorl in the shape of a ball, showed her how to adapt it to the spindle, and explained to her its use and divine origin. It announced to her that hereafter similar spindle whorl would fall from the sky with the rain for the women who spun cotton.

/104/ Having resumed her work with this new tool the woman was successful in it and taught her companions. They then threw their first threads into the Niger as an offering to the spirit so that the secret might not be lost. All artisans did the same with their first piece of work (2).

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2. Every first piece of work is thrown into the river as an offering to Faro. It is a guarantee for the artisan that his skill will be retained and that his technique will improve. Actually the young spinners of Ségou throw their first spindle into the river. In addition, the parata bird which taught weaving is captured, its wings and feet are roasted, and the powder is given to whoever begins the appreticeship so that it may be over rapidly.

The loom was invented later. The positions of the warp and woof and the practice of breaks and knots were modified. The loom was formerly the object of nocturnal human sacrifices whereas the shuttle received lesser sacrifices in the day time (1).

1. At present, looms are set in the ground above a piece of pottery, the bottom of which is pierced before the pot is buried.

The stone on which women clean the cotton, kaba, represents the sky and recalls the divine origin of cotton and of the technology relating to it.

Clothing

Clothing which has intimate contact with the human body is a part of the person wearing it. On the other hand, the material of which it is made, and the various elements which compose it and which are associated with one or another aspect of Bambara metaphysics, exercise an influence on the wearer. The choice of clothing is rarely a matter of chance or individual taste and the various manifestations of social or religious life usually obligate people to wear appropriate clothing, the symbolism of which is linked to the action or circumstance under consideration. The role of the garment appears as early as infancy: a newborn wears around his loins a cotton thread, dyura dyuru, which is both a protection (for it "solidifies his spinal column") and a foreshadowing of what he will wear later. When he reaches the required age, a family reunion takes place on the day he is dressed for the first time. Before this, it is necessary for him to have dreamed of his first garment and to have talked to his mother of this dream; she then begins to spin the necessary cotton. Before dressing, the initiate proceeds with an ablution called mayadyi (literally, water of the person's action) in water taken from the Niger or from a pond of Faro's. The dressed child is told "that he is now a man and may become a member of the ndomo (2)"; then his kinsfolk tease

2. Society of the uncircumcised
(see p. 222).

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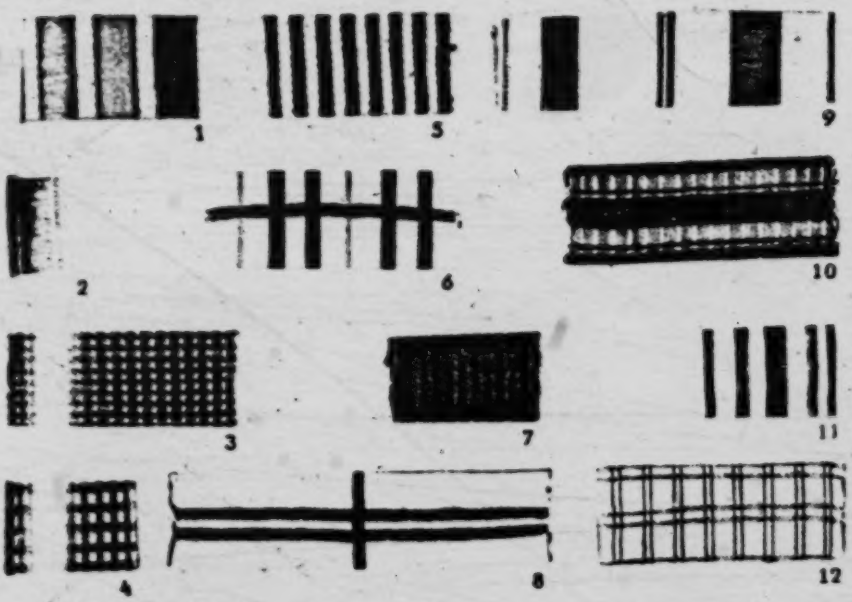

(a) Bands of cotton (the warp is presented vertically).

Plate III

(b) Offering of a band of cotton to the dasiri tree (Soroba).

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773 564 326 412 The first forged tool, the kongobwona (literally, to abandon hunger), is still used by blacksmiths today as a ritual axe (Fig. 9, E).

It is made up of a wooden handle terminating in an enlargement which forms its bulk, and pierced by a bent iron rod which in turn holds the cutting edge (farabye) of the axe proper. The handle is very long, allowing the man to work without bending over.

The tool justifies its name for it brought prosperity to the craftsmen. The symbolism of the different sections shows this: the enlarged part of the consecrated model, which each blacksmith keeps on his altar and which is the object of regular rituals, is hollowed out and holds money, millet, and copper. The iron rod which pierces it represents at its lower extremity the tongue of the oldest of the Gwonna, and at its upper extremity that of the youngest, thus recalling the actions and the words of those who discovered the metal for the benefit of all.

Later, blacksmiths manufactured other models of iron axes and hoes, copying those previously used, but reducing their size.

Each day the end piece of the wooden hoes was abandoned at the crossroads after they had been used in honor of the local spirit. The worker kept only the handle and carved a new tool for the following day. The handles of hoes and axes were considered to be people because they were impregnated with the vital force of those who held them. The farmer left the cutting edge (of stone or iron) in his field and brought home the handle which he placed on his mat at night.

[782] Weapons and tools were the objects of regular sacrifices. The handle was removed and the blood of victims would flow first into the hole used to secure it, then on the cutting edge, while the officiating person recited a prayer.

773 564 326 412 778 Today, the assemblages of ancient tools are called makorobaw ka minew (literally, tools of the great ancestor). Considered as the most respectable and precious /119/ testimony of their civilization, models of each object are kept in sanctuaries called makoroba so (literally, house of the ancestors) which are generally natural caves or holes dug in the ground, reminiscent of primitive habitations. These tools are identified with the ancestors who used them and who were, long before the organization of religious societies, the object of a regular cult. That is why, in deference to this fundamental hierarchy, they are presented to the circumcised in front of the family altars (1) at the time of the initiation of the Komo. Similarly, they

1. Particularly in the village of Konodimini in the Ségou region.

575 323 [561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de- [831] clared dangadé (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged [304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

575 323 867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

575 323 782 431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

323 317 784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

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the latter abandoned their hoes in order to watch them. The birds fetched water with their beaks on the shore of a neighboring pond and returned to pour it at the foot of a millet stalk, the ear of which was not yet formed. The men put a mark on this stalk in order to recognize it and later observed that it produced a finer ear than the others. Imitating the bird, they dampened their plantings and watered their fields; their harvest was considerably improved by it. They kept up this habit and, in acknowledgment, produced a cult to the Sago spirit whose emissaries the birds were and who comes to slake his thirst at the Ču̍afebla."

778 it is the object of sacrifices when important business is being handled:
794 marriage, private or administrative action, fight against an epidemic.
[428] A son may inherit his father's altar and keep it with his own which he wears tied to his hip.

The Ču̍afebyēni (literally, little horn at the hip) is composed of a cowrie, taken from Faro's granary, copper which is the altar's soul /133/ (ni), pepper, charcoal, and honey. This mixture is introduced into a ram's horn decorated with cowries at its opening and often wrapped in a red cloth bearing the same ornamentation.

[782] The altar is consecrated on those of the Komo, over which it is passed seven times. The throats of victims are cut, their blood is collected in a gourd, and the boli dipped into it three times before being taken out in the sun to dry.

Its role is one of protection. Its owner carries it during the Komo ceremonies to defend himself against spells, korti, which may be cast by someone in the audience.

It also maintains the integrity of its owner's forces. If the latter faints or goes into a trance, he is returned to his normal state by completely renewing the ingredients which constitute it. When the horn is emptied of its contents, "both the soul of the altar and that of the man" are removed. The container is rinsed out with water from the

778 Niger after which the reconstitution of the altar is carried on and is
794 equivalent to "the taking on a new soul." Each family member comes to the aid of the party concerned: the father gives copper, the women, peppers, the children, charcoal; a new cowrie is removed from Faro's granary.

778 The mbendyugukã (literally, I am on the enemy) is an individual
794 altar which permits its owner to overcome his adversaries and even to
754 attack their life.

The person who wishes to own one makes it after the death of an enemy. He goes secretly to unearth the corpse, shaves off its hair, cuts off its tongue and nails, and removes the eyes.

An elderly owner of such an altar takes it with him to the person who wishes to make one. The latter prepares and mixes the ingredients according to a special ritual and ties them to a hyena's tail. Before a witness who belongs to his age grade, the elder rubs the new altar on the old one seven times while reciting a prayer to consecrate it; he then returns it to its owner (1).

> 1. Because of its evil powers, the altar may not be made and entrusted to its owner except in the presence of a known witness.

The symbolism of the various parts composing it explain the use to which this altar will later be put. The tongue of the dead man contains his voice and gives to that of the owner the strength to convince those who contradict him in arguments as well as in council meetings. The eyes of the dead man permit him to see what others may not see, or even to blind his enemies by poisoning them with his nails. The hair, evidence of the other parts /134/ of the corpse, contains the nyama of the deceased and is an essential part of the mbendyugukã.

[595] The owner of this altar, which excludes the number four, marries only three wives. Moreover, he cannot mix his own hair with that of another without risking death.

● [782] Because of its aggressive character, the mbendyugukã demands victims, dogs or roosters, of red coloring. It gives to whomever owns it a strength which will always be greater than that of his competitors in whatever he may undertake.

778 For this reason it receives sacrifices at the time when the fields
794 are being worked, for trade, marriage, war, and hunting where the
754 person risks his life; it helps to fight illness and death. Immediately after the first sacrifice, it captures the personality and aggressiveness of the dead man and puts them on its owner, making him doubly dangerous to those with whom he is in conflict. But on the other hand, the danger may turn against him and, to a greater extent than anyone else, he risks his life at the slightest broken taboo.

Furthermore, the Komo who disapproves of such operations may, if he considers it useful, loosen the dead man's nyama on the person who is using his spiritual forces and put him in danger of death. Thus a Bambara will hesitate a long time before owning such an altar; in fact very few individuals assume this heavy responsibility.

C. The Chief's Seat

778 In the courtyard of the home of a family head or village chief can
622 be found a pile of wood stuck on the ground and called dyamana tigi jigi (literally, support of the owner of the world) (Fig. 11). This seat symbolizes at once the chief, his power, his social and religious role of supporting the group (1).

1. The seat described below was observed at Banankoroni in the courtyard of the village chief. A similar one is found at Soroba.

The pieces of bent wood which compose it are planted rather deep into the earth above a series of objects. One of these pieces, with a simple bend (in a) is called sinzin, support; the two others, shaped like a T, are called jigi ba jigi (in b) (literally, support of the big support).

● F82 The whole lies over the body of an albino (c) buried in a tomb
766 having a ritual form, covered with ancient clothing dyed in wolo and speckled with small black spots made of /135/ bone ash (kolofin), which represent at the same time the embryo in the womb of women and Faro. The head is covered with the cap of primitive men (e).

In (d), three pickets, symbols of man, are stuck through the skin of the albino's forehead; this skin had been removed and seven ritual

622 778 of polished stone called fara yele, "stone that rejoices," expresses the wish that the chief's rule prosper.

The seat, taken as a whole, represents the chief's skeleton and his joints. It is erected upon various elements which sum up his ties to the ancestors and the supernatural powers, indicating his responsibility and contributing to the maintenance of his strength. It is situated in such a way that all the events in the courtyard take place around it and that nothing which is said is out of earshot. As a center of the family household, as the symbol of the industrious and responsible man, it is the framework of the community which it upholds, just as the chief does through his physical endurance and moral firmness. The whole village "leans upon the chief's joint."

Each morning and evening, the ǰigi ba ǰigi and the ba ǰigi /137/ are greeted so that the chief may be strong, that his family may increase, that he may foster the ancestral beliefs. Offerings and [782] libations are made upon the seat and upon the body of the chief when his authority is questioned. In (b) tomato juice is being poured; in (a), representing the elbow or the knee, the water which has been used for ritual bathing of these same joints; at the foot, in (n), the fowls' throats are cut while the officiator, before pouring down the blood of the sacrifice, blows into a small hole dug in the ground; finally, in (l) the water which was used to wash the chief's whole body is poured in.

[826] In this way the chief's joints, which are the seat of his strength and his procreative seed, are purified and fortified.

II. Village Cults

794 The village, as a physical entity, and its inhabitants are placed under the protection of the supernatural powers and of the ancestors. Faro is directly invoked at all water spots.

If the village is situated at the river's edge, the rituals are addressed to the Faro tyin. If it is not too far from the bank, the inhabitants go out to make their offerings to the spirit. Frequently, the stream, pond, or natural well, which often determined the site chosen by the founders, is though to be inhabited by an incarnation of Faro whose name is revered and to whom all offer a cult.

On the other hand, each village is placed under the protection of the dasiri, a special spirit delegated by Faro.

794 776 778 [563] In some villages, the sacrificer never consumes butter or milk, foods which the Peul furnish the Bambara.

the culprit and deprives the villagers of their protector.

794 776 825 The spirit of the dasiri sometimes has as its compansion an animal which seems to represent the group's ancestor. At Ségou, it is a crocodile; at Ouélenguena, a she-ass; at Koulikoro, a monkey; in other places it is a male goat which is replaced when it dies. At Konodimini there are a series of deep intercommunicating wells which would have served as homes for the ancestors. These holes are at present occupied by hyenas which are considered to be incarnations of the blacksmiths of former times and which are the dasiri of the place.

The dasiri's animal is free to enter homes and to eat what it finds. It is often fed by the inhabitants. No one may attack it and whoever breaks this taboo, set on by a vengeful nyama of which he cannot [582 626] rid himself, risks being forbidden to marry, even being no longer tolerated in his native village (1).

1. This was, at Soroba, the case of Dji Diara, who, after killing a hyena, could not marry as no woman was willing to link her destiny to his.

794 776 782 As its name indicates, the function of the dasiri is to maintain the stability and integrity of the village. It is the "support of the inhabitants' lives"; the numerous rituals (individual or collective), of which it is the object, reveal the importance of its role as well as the diversity of the beings invoked. To Faro are addressed prayers for rain; to the ancestors prayers for questions /139/ concerning the family; and to the spirit of the tree when it is a matter of stopping an epidemic. But directly or indirectly, any sacrifice offered to the dasiri is offered to Faro. The victims (sheep or fowl) and the offerings (cotton bands, kola nuts) are always white (see Pl. 3, b).

794 778 852 When children reach the age of six or seven, they are led to the tree; they sit on its roots upon which kola nut juice is spat, and are, by this fact, introduced into the village cult. They are then presented to all the allies senánku and especially to the blacksmiths with whom they proceed to joke.

794 Each year a sacrifice bringing together all the inhabitants is offered
776 to the dasiri and is terminated by communal eating of the sacrificial
782 victim. The first fruits of the harvest are also brought to it by the sacrificer.

B. The dangu

776, The crossroads dangu or danku (literally, boundary of the head) are
778 inhabited by the Soba spirits who, under Faro, constantly intervene
823 in human affairs. Everything placed at this spot belongs to them,
783 and no one passes by without leaving an offering or a token of his presence: a tool, raw cotton, seeds, cloth. A travelling stranger kneels and deposits a little ash or some cotton; if not, he cleans off a little space on which he spits before leaving. A child passing by will greet it with these words: "Crossroads, my soul is in your hands." On the occasion of any event concerning the individual; the family, or the community, red kola nuts are placed at the crossroads and the following words uttered: "You, crossroads, I entrust my head to you; you are my support; I say, you, crossroads" (1).

1. E dangu m be ni ku kalifa, do i la ni jigi be fe, ngo e dangu.

The corssroad, as an ideal public thoroughfare, is the chosen spot where one easily rids oneself of the nyama which any individual keeps and carries about with him. All that is impure, unlucky, and undesirable for the individual or the community is left at the crossroads. Objects which have belonged to dead people are also left there. The forces which are thus gotten rid of are supposedly absorbed by the spirits for whom they constitute a kind of nourishment which will then be returned to men in the form of gifts free of any taint. (2)

2. See p. 258.

/140/ Several examples will illustrate the role played by the crossroads in the community:

Any man who has wounded an animal or squashed an insect is affected in his own tere by that of the victim. He goes to the crossroads, kneels, and prays, depositing at the same time a band of cotton, an egg, and ashes. The band of woven cotton, symbol of

794 778 B. Altars of the Komo

The boli altars occupy a distinguished place in the religious and mythological representations of the society organized around them. On the one hand they are a capsule of the universe because of their composition; on the other they are a capsule of the society as all its members are present in them. In fact, each member has provided a part of the composing elements after having impregnated them with his person by salivating over them while pronouncing his name.

794 778 346 The altars of the Komo are kept in a sanctuary, the komo so (literally, house of the Komo), a medium sized hut built either in the chief's dwelling place, or in the bush at some distance from the village. The approach to this structure which is under Faro's protection is forbidden to the ordinary person. The chief himself never enters alone. It is said that a snake, the soul and guardian of the sanctuary, is born and lives at the top of the hut in the branches which form the roof (Pl. VI, a).

The hut is divided into a number of floors on each of which is placed /146/ an altar. The highest one contains at its center the nimara boli (literally, altar of the souls) which, as its name indicates, is the container of the souls belonging to deceased members of the society and to sacrificed animals (1). It contains, from top to bottom,

[774 782] 1. There is constant preoccupation with preserving all vital elements. The souls of sacrificed animals are the object of the same care as those of humans. Like them, they participate in the resurrection promised to everything which has lived.

hair of the dead, copper for the souls of animals, gold for those of men. These various ingredients, placed in a double sac, receive the sacrificial blood which runs between the two layers and soaks them.

794 778 The nimara boli is surrounded by small individual altars which have served to channel the souls of the dying and lead them to the common receptacle (2). These small boli remain in the hut only

2. See p. 175.

794 778 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217). The agricultural role of the Komo will be described by S. de Ganay in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture.

794 778 784 The main taboo of the ñõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

794 778 724 The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war, execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

794 778 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the ñõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

[782]

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

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often contain ingredients which have been pulverized: wood dust, charcoal powder, even powder of precious metals. Our investigation has not yet allowed us to clarify the role of this pulverization process. However, its mention by the Bambara and the frequent use of korti indicate the importance attached to this type of preparation.

/148/ Outside the hut, at the height of the nyama boli, a hook holds up the clothes of those who are killed by the Komo. The sanctuary, as well as the clothing of the mask, is daubed with black earth taken on the shore of the river representing Faro, and covered with feathers of the same color. Generally speaking, the metal [823] contained in the Komo altars gives it its strength and life. The most powerful of these is gold, silver comes next, then copper. Since each person gives an offering according to his means, the power of the altar thus depends in a certain measure on the wealth of the members of the society.

[782] Regular sacrifices upon the stakes, the bases of which sometimes contain a little wood from the historic canoe of Makanta Djigui, permit them to "maintain the pressure, the life" in the various altars.

These altars are removed from the sanctuary only upon the occasion of funerals or agricultural rites. When the mask is removed and when there are dances, replicas commonly found in the home of the chief are sometimes used instead.

The pembele is the protector of the society, the container of the forces (nyama) of the group. It is rarely placed in the sanctuary and usually kept by the chief who never exhibits it; occasionally it is watered with rain water symbolizing the work of creation.

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Before the annual ceremony called "anniversary of the Komo," drawings are made on the sanctuary by the chief or an elder; they are a reminder that the sanctuary is the link between the invisible powers and the members of the society. Besides the image of creation as an issue of the initial vibration (see Fig. 2), the head of the ancestor Koumabana, figurations of the twins, and the twenty-two fundamental signs are sometimes drawn. Finally hoes emphasize the agricultural function of the Komo (1). Granaries intended for conserving grains

1. At the time when the attention of specialists is attracted by the division of

794 The candidates next swear an oath the text of which is recited by the chief:

"If I reveal (the secrets of) the boli, may it kill me; if I disclose the institutions, may they kill me; until my death, if I speak, may my father die, may my mother die, may the boli break my heart" (1).

1. Ni nye korobo, boli ka fa, ni nye korobo, dyow ka fa, fo kata n sa ni nya fo n fa ka sa m ba ka sa, boli dyugu ka sõ ta.

Each in his turn, the children next lick the head and the hooks of the mask three times, thus assuring it their allegiance: "Until my death, I shall not reveal the koli. Faro has not been revealed! Let the koli not be revealed!" (1)

1. Fo ka ta n sa nte korobo koli, faro ma korobo, koli kana korobo.

After the altars, including the pembele, have been presented to [782] them, the postulants drink the blood of a goat offered in sacrifice; thus they assimilate the forces of the Komo and by this communion consecrate their oath.

Finally, the mechanism of the society in all its details is explained to them: the necessity of hierarchy in age grades, of respect for taboos, and of the secrecy in which all that concerns the organization must be held. A moral lesson is also taught them; in particular they [867] are advised to set themselves a line of conduct in private life as well as in public life, to be righteous, to avoid duplicity and bad faith, flãvlãña (literally, double action), never to serve two masters, and not to entertain conflicting desires among themselves.

794 As an illustration, the adventures of the first members who broke these laws are told.
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539 One of Makanta Djigui's companions, Garou Keita, was afflicted with this serious fault. He had become friendly with Moridje Sidibé, son of the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé, who had the same character. At this period three great Komo were already functioning in the region: that of Koulikouro called selo (literally, grave); that of Nyamina called dyibi (literally, dark); and that of Kankan.

Garou went to one of the ceremonies of the Komo of Kankan /156/ and by telling lies, incited the members to revolt against the local

794 3. Su kasa be.
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688 The man lowers his head and all move away from him. The masker
766 wounds him with the right hook. He is banished from the circle of dancers and probably will die several days later. His funeral rites are not solemnized. The corpse is tied by the feet and removed from his home through a hole made in the wall to prevent his evil nyama from returning to the family. The body is beaten with switches so that the soul may leave the village forever, and is thrown into the common grave or placed in the cleft of a tree, which is then closed up with thorny bushes. In this case it is often devoured by the hyenas. The clothing which belonged to him is hung on the hook placed on the outside wall of the sanctuary. No one has the right to weep for his death and no one ever mentions him again. To do so would be an offense to the Komo.

794 It may also happen that the emergence of the Komo occurs without
796 the village being warned. In this case, if a young girl imprudently
688 approaches the place where the dance is being held, the masker may
782 kill her with one blow of its hook directly upon her head. A little of her blood is then placed as an offering on the nya and her jewelry thrown into the river where her soul goes to replace the virgin who, in former times, was annually offered to Faro.

G. Effects of Broken Taboos

794 The breaking of the taboos attached to the altars or to the mask
783 reacts upon each of the parts affected as it does upon the whole and brings about a diminishing of the Komo's power, which is abandoned by Faro and the ancestors. A purification may be performed /164/ in certain cases. The error is then corrected and the spiritual forces reenter the altars.

If a woman or a noninitiate catches a glimpse of the nya, the komo tigi and his age grade go down to the river bank and, to the sound of drums, present the culprit's apologies to the spirit:

"I have not come for someone else, I have come for myself, I have come to reestablish the race of our fathers" (1).

1. Ne mana ma nyini; ne mana nyere nyini,
ne ma na m fa sia tuku ko la.

194 instruction and initiation. Five years are thus necessary to reach the highest rank. Each promotion is paid for by the individual providing [782] two roosters whose throats are cut upon the altars at the end of the annual ceremony which takes place in the bush under a tree called the kalabana, following communally performed labor. After meal, a [526] fight called bari, organized under the direction of the chiefs, puts the young boys in opposite groups and gives them the opportunity to show their courage and their initiative.

194 476 The members' activity consists of collective work at the time of the cultivation. The millet and the gifts in kind received in payment for the work are owned communally.

A. Material Objects of the Cult.

194 118 534 The society is the owner of ritual objects such as a mask and whips which are usually placed in a hut, ndomo buku, at some distance from the village.

The objects, numbering five, are rudimentary musical instruments. The wara, the clawed one, or diara, the lion, is a wooden bull-roarer approximately 35 centimeters in length, which is manipulated by means of a string a meter long. Sometimes the object is of iron and of smaller dimensions. The tori, toad, is a small box which gives off a nasal sound when it is scratched. The kono, bird, is made of two pieces of gourd bound together by spider webs. The wulu, dog, is a small calabash of about 10 centimeters in diameter, punctured by four holes. A string, threaded through its neck, allows it to be rotated like a rhombos. The jineble (literally, red spirit) is a buffalo horn pierced by three holes, /172/ obstructed by spider webs, into which one blows and which produce a loud, flute-like sound. One society usually owns several specimens of each of these instruments.

194 118 532 The mask, said to be the most ancient object, is of sculptured wood representing a human face crowned by several vertical, rather long horns (1). The whole is completely decorated with cowrie shells and

1. The masks most often carry eight horns, but this rule is not always respected.

red kise (2), grains which represent the blood from the offerings. The

2. Linociera sudarica.

794 On the following night, the future initiates are led into the bush to a place called biri yoro (literally, place of initiation), where they sit down upon the ground, their heads covered with a piece of cloth.

At a sign from the dyolokotigi, a member causes the ritual instruments to roar or sing in succession; then he hides them and the postulants must find them. As they are not able to do so, a series of hazings are inflicted upon them (1) after which they are shown the

1. These hazings are often severe; fun is made of the ignorance and fears of the postulant.

instruments and each in turn made to repeat the solemn oath:

"If you have heard the dyara of the uncircumcised, that is it. Chisel a piece of wood, make a hole, put a string through, turn it, it is that which is the word of the ndomo dyara. If you reveal it, may it take your heart, may it take your liver, may it kill you" (2).

2. Ni ye me bilakorow ka ndomo dyara, nin do ka djiri dese, ka wo bo o la, ka dyuru ndo o la, o bi fyeku, o de bi ndomo dyara ka fo, hi ya korobo, a ki sɔ̃ ta, a ki biñe ta, a ki fa.

Next, they are made to lick three times the object which is then entrusted to them so that they may learn to use it. The same ritual is performed for each instrument, and the prayer is repeated with only a change in the name.

The young men frequently sacrifice upon the altars of the ndomo.
794 The usual content of the sacrifice is the gray lizard /margouillat/,
● 782 busa, likened to an uncircumcised boy (its tail representing the
825 foreskin). The victim's wanzo, liberated by death, joins the wanzo contained in the altars and, consequently, that of the members.
[262] The animal is then cooked and eaten.

C. Activity of the Society

794 At the time the fields are being cultivated, the members who are called upon to do work take their ritual objects along. The young

D. Role of the Institution

794 182 According to Bambara expression, the ndomo is "the mother of the wanzo of the uncircumcised (1)" for its power which resides in the

1. Wanzo ba ye ɛeble

ritual objects /175/ is composed of the wanzo of all adolescents.

The mask and the altars at first keep a part of the wanzo of the members who wear them, manipulate them, or offer them sacrifices. On the other hand, after circumcision, at the moment of the final leap of the newly circumcised over the ritual fire, the wanzo ultimately leaves them to settle itself in the mask of the ndomo. Thus channeled and conserved, these forces add themselves to those of the uncircumcised in the masks which become the repositories of their life.

[775] Moreover, the soul of the uncircumcised and nonexcised who have died prematurely establishes itself in the altars during the funeral rites celebrated by the members.

The mask of the ndomo is thus the receptacle of the wanzo of the circumcised, living and dead; as for the altars, they contain all the souls of the uncircumcised dead. All of this confers upon the ndomo the responsibility for the life of the adolescents and gives it such power that to a certain extent, this society of young people is feared by the adults (2) who have left it.

794 833 ●782 2. When an adult, especially a member of the Komo society, has disturbed the peace of a member of the ndomo or has wronged the society, the wanzo may cause him to be impotent. In this case, in order to recover his virility, the man must obtain several tens of gray lizards which are sacrificed in his name on the mask and other altars. The animals are then cooked and the man is completely smeared over with the cooked substance which is then placed in the calabash and poured over the altars; the wanzo assigned to the man by the ndomo thus returns to the latter and the man is rid of its evil.

364 778 782 (a) Household refuse, collected individually, is placed in separate piles inside shallow circular excavations dug out at the approaches to the villages (see Pl. VI, b). Among wealthy people a goat is sacrificed each week by having its throat cut above the pile on which the altar is temporarily placed. The sacrifice effects a double exchange: the blood nourishes the altar while at the same time it brings about the transfer into the altar of the forces contained in the refuse.

364 778 796 . Every two months and seven days, at the decision of the village chief, these individual rubbish piles are removed from the holes. Each person burns his own pile and inhales the smoke. The ashes are deposited on the river bank, dampened so that the wind does not blow them away, and abandoned during seven days, a period during which Faro "comes to visit them and to bless them."

On the eighth day, after a meeting at the chief's residence, the villagers gather at the crossroads to burn the collective refuse piles, to collect the ashes, and to transport them, accompanied by the rhythm wanzo foli beaten on the drums, to the river bank where they will join those of the individual heaps.

After a sacrifice offered upon the konye altars of the participants, the griot of the Komo is struck by the nyama boli until he goes into a trance and flings himself into the water without saying a word. All must throw their ashes in after him before he comes out again. At that moment the spittles of the man who flutters about in the water are collected as a gift from Faro in exchange for the refuse which has been thrown in. Each person rubs his hands and feet with the saliva and upon returning, which is done in silence, impregnates the threshold of his home with it as evidence of the sacrifice so that Faro "might recognize his own and protect their life."

/203/ The following Thursday the people gather to dance according to the rhythms appropriate to each sex and generation. In the evening, each person places his foot on the site of the refuse heap; then all gather at the crossroads to offer the Soba spirit some millet, cotton, and kola nuts. The ceremony ends with a meeting at the chief's residence where he gives advice and encourages each one to respect tradition and to honor the ancestors and the protecting spirits.

(b) After the comings out of the Komo, the refuse is swept up and deposited in front of the sanctuary. Each participant leaps over the pile three times to communicate his nyama to it. In the evening the masker circles and whistles around the heap on which fire is lit while

IV. Rites for the Renewal of the Year

796 These rites involve individual, familial, and collective actions;
783 the latter bring into play most of the institutions (1). Everyone, from

1. As examples of collective rites we present those which are performed on the stone altars of the village (fara ba) (see p. 129).

the newborn to the elder, must undergo a kind of purification which consists essentially of the /207/ rejection of the breath and forces of the past year and of the taking in of new breath and forces. It is, according to Bambara expression, " a refreshing of the body and soul. " But the renewal is not limited to elements which make up the person; it extends to the cosmos and the cardinal points.

1. The individual rite of the family chief is performed with the instrument ngoni, which is used to make on the wall of his ǯeso the drawings representing the universe. (2) He starts out with an offering

2. See p. 172, Fig. 10.

of tomato juice to Faro who presides over the family use of the object and who is present thereafter. The fruits are squeezed; a hedgehog
825 is sacrificed over the juice so that no other spirit may touch it. Next
782 the man sacrifices a gray lizard as a reminder of his own condition before circumcision. This sacrifice represents a new circumcision offered to Faro and increases his strength.

The man who is offering the sacrifice puts his tongue in the juice of the fruit without swallowing a drop in order to give Faro " a complete accounting of all his acts and thoughts during the past year (work, births, deaths, illnesses, quarrels, fortune, and misfortune) just as a subordinate gives an accounting to his superior. " He puts his right little finger in the liquid and places it on the wall over the drawing representing Faro. Then he sucks in a little of the tomato juice through his nostrils and blows it over the ngoni, thus sweeping away the remaining life from the past year which he still had in his body. A new air which comes from Faro then circulates in his lungs. He next fills his mouth with the liquid contained in the male goatskin of the instrument and spits it out immediately to show the spirit that

*173 "Very well," said Ton-massa, "I'll give you the cowries, you divide them, let's celebrate. We are free and life was made to be enjoyed."

Kanou-ba-nyouma thanked him on behalf of all and asked leave to retire with his companions.

Ton-massa kept with him Ngolo Dyara, Kolé and Na-n-koro-ba Nzan-gué.

He appointed another assembly for a fortnight later when offerings would be made to the dead and to the idols.

Everyone was prompt at the assembly.

Ton-massa said: "Now then, where shall we begin? With the dead or with the idols?"

"You ask our advice?" cried Kanou-ba-nyouma. "You paid no attention to our views when you killed our master! You wanted to be chief -- now exert your authority!"

"Very well, we'll begin with the dead," said Ton-massa.

[782] He sacrificed a young man to the shades of Mamari, the founder of the clan, and then ordered the sofa leaders to sacrifice two more, and Kanou-ba-nyouma still another. This was the first time that human sacrifices were performed on the tomb of the dead.

On the eighth day after this ceremony, Ton-massa called a general gathering of the slaves and, when all had arrived, cried out: "We buried a corpse but left a foot protruding." He alluded to Mamari's last-remaining son, Dyon-kolo, who lived at Oftala on the left bank of the Niger.

"We did away with Dé-koro only because he did wrong," said Kolé, "and we still have the same veneration for our master [Mamari] and his descendants. The right thing would be to bring Dyon-kolo here, where he can take his father's place and bring peace among us."

Kanou-ba-nyouma said to Ton-massa: "How will you ever be able to face a man whose brother you murdered? Now will you explain your crime to him, a crime that has put you in his father's place? Nevertheless, I shan't oppose the idea simply to perpetuate our discord and, if it is the general will to bring Dyon-kolo back, so be it."

[61] Two Peul, named Bon-gué and Ndyan, were selected to carry out the delicate mission to Dyon-kolo. Upon reaching

596 614 The functions of the "fa." The duties of the fa are many and complex; for the sake of clarity, we shall study them under three headings: cult; relations between communities; administration of property (which will be studied in connection with community property).

596 614 782 Cult. Religion gives considerable strength to the family since nothing is decided without consulting the manes and the gods. Raffenel has given us a picture of old Niany praying to his manes on behalf of his absent son: "O my God, I command my son to your case since he has gone away on a mission important to all of us. Be with him on his journey. Preserve him from the wicked and from all misfortune so that he may once again enter by this door through which he departed and before which I am now kneeling. I implore you, O my God, to restore him to my love and to that of his mother, his brothers and his sisters (1)."

[114]

1. In spite of deviations due to Raffenel's desire to give a personal and literary touch to what he reports, the essential points of this prayer are accurate, and that is why I quote it.

[787] The chronicle of Kaarta tells us that old Sounson begged for early death as a sign that his lineage would be powerful in the future. Also, in order to make a prophecy come true, Deniba Bo submitted to the fatal blows of the Khassonké to make sure that his people would conquer the country.

After all, no one is free of fear of the gods, not even those whom one would take for brave spirits. Raffenel tells us that Bouo, his informant, feared the wrath of the god whose secrets he had revealed. The chronicle of Ségou tells that Ngolo, thinking he had aroused the wrath of his manes by encouraging evil desires in his eldest son, Ntyi, did not hesitate to sacrifice his [179] own grandson, the son of the aforesaid Ntyi, an atrocity which bears witness to a faith that was as profound as it was barbarous.

596 honored by the new fa, and there is nothing to prevent him
614 from adding to the treasure.

769 The basic cult of the family is the cult of the ancestors. Although the dead are frequently buried outside the family residence, their souls are thought to live in the blon' of the dwelling. The blon' is a hut with two openings on opposite sides, one [343 592] to the street and the other to the interior, usually the courtyard. It is impossible to enter or leave a house without going through the blon', where there is always a guard, at least in
778 important houses. The ancestors are usually represented in the
769 blon' by a group of crude, conical clay figures of a man and woman, the latter identifiable by the exaggerated breasts. Sometimes the symbol of the dead is a small board about a meter long, twenty centimeters wide, and a little more than a centimeter thick; at one of its extremities a slight protuberance vaguely suggests a head, a kind of ellipsoidal cylinder with eyes, nose, mouth, and chin faintly carved on one side. On the side with the face, the board has a checkerboard pattern, often of alternating black and red squares, probably to indicate the material of a loincloth. The lower extremity of the figure has a semicircular portion cut away to give the effect of legs spread apart when the effigy is set up.

769 Whatever form it may have, the representation of the
●782 dead is called kara (1) and serves in some manner as an altar
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1. In Soninké, kara means "to die" and "death."

on which libations are poured and to which are attached the remains of the sacrifices made to the dead (su-u). Nevertheless, it is also a very widespread practice to make libations and sacrifices before the door of the blon' and, more rarely, before the door of an inner hut. In this case the liquid is poured and [775] the remains smeared on the vertical edge of the opening. This practice is based on the belief that the souls of the dead ancestors like to return to the place where the fa liked to sit during his lifetime. Undoubtedly, the ancestors are regarded as guardians of the threshold; they are [181] honored as such because it is believed that they prefer to be honored in this way.

769 This is the place where on important occasions the fa
778 receives congratulations or condolences, which are addressed
782 not only to him but also to the ancestors who, though invisible, are nevertheless present.

When the fa wishes to make an offering to the ances-
769 tors (fa su son'), he squats before the door of the blon' with his
782 head bare and a chicken in his hand. He addresses the most recently deceased (1), saying: "I offer this chicken in my own

1. It seems that the ancestors form a kind of chain in which the first invisible link is the ancestor most recently deceased and the first visible link is the current fa.

name and in that of my children. Jointly with our dead fathers and mothers, preserve us from sorcerers who eat souls (suba) and from the evil of the wicked; protect us from sickness and disaster; guard our health; give us good wives and healthy children; bring success to our work in the fields, and give us rain."

If the offering is being made for a particular purpose, the fa is explicit about it and speaks just as he would to a living person. He concludes by asking that the victim reveal the response by the way it falls as it dies. Then he cuts the chicken's throat and dribbles the blood on the wall at either side of the door of the blon'. He than resumes his crouched position, and after throwing the fowl a short distance, he watches its convul-
787 sions and waits for it to fall motionless. Usually the position is regarded as favorable if the animal dies with its legs in the air and its feet turned toward the officiator; if the feet are turned away, the response is unfavorable. Often, just as he completes the offering, the fa announces what position he considers favorable or unfavorable.

The fa gives the sacrificed chicken to his wife to be cooked, and then he divides it among the members of the family; this is truly a communion.

769 As a substitute for the chicken, it is very common to
782 offer some dege, a bit of millet coarsely ground and thrown in a little water. The fa keeps this liquid in a small gourd. It is perhaps [182] reasonable to think that this is the most ancient manner of honoring the dead and, in particular, calling for their protection in obtaining the two essentials of life: grain and water.

[273] An equally common libation is made with dlo, a kind of millet beer which every Bambara enjoys drinking to the point of intoxication. The dead could hardly fail to be pleased with an offering of what they had enjoyed so much on earth!

[276] One must conclude, too, that offerings of kola nuts please the dead because it gives them a chance to enjoy a favorite treat. The officiator chews the kola nut and then spits out his saliva mixed with the juice and remains along the walls of the blon'.

Such are the ordinary offerings, but on special occasions the quantity and importance of the gifts are increased according to the desired results. When many people are present and the [781] house is prosperous, the victims are oxen and sheep. It should not be forgotten that the flesh of these consecrated victims, eaten in common, makes a very strong mystical bond between the participants; it is a true communion. It is generally conceded that the bond created by drinking consecrated liquids together is much less strong.

776 In addition to his ancestors, every Bambara has as his
778 special protector, one of those gods (nyana) which are created wholly by the work of the magician. Every family has one or more nyana, whose priest is the fa. The boli, the symbol and altar of this type of divinity, is usually hidden from the uninitiated; it is put into a leather or canvas sack, a gourd, or a pot. The nyana of Sounsan, the ancestor of the Massa-si, was a n-ko whose boli was kept in a monkey skin. The boli is taken out of its cover so that libations can be poured over it and animal remains smeared on it. If there is some objection to exposing it, the offering is put on the cover.

769 Everything that takes place relative to the cult of the
794 nyana is analogous to that described for the cult of the ancestors.

621 successive groups, each recognizing a genie-protector. In that
776 case, the genie first recognized and worshiped takes precedence over the others. In any case, social life requires each segment to respect the gods of its neighbors, and this respect carries with it a certain amount of superstitious fear.

311 It is evident from the foregoing that occupying and
621 cultivating land poses certain problems for the settlement bene-
744 fited, and these may be grouped under three heads: the cult of the genie-protector; the exploitation of the land; and the organization of the territorial community.

793 The cult. This is mainly supported by the high priest,
794 whose principal duty is to "make the offerings" (son') to the "genie" [229] (nyana), hence his title nyana-son-na-ba. He is assisted by the council of fa, one of whom, the syere (follower), may replace him in case of need. The office of high priest is for life and is inherited in the same way as his faya. This continuity shows that the genie is actually regarded as a kind of spiritual ancestor of the priest, as we have seen from the fact that it is given the same dyamu as its high priest.

794 The cult ceremonies are very simple. They consist of
796 offerings made by the high priest, who at the same time indicates to the genie the purpose for which they are being made. The most solemn ceremonies take place when millet is sown and harvested. For these occasions, every worshiper is expected to bring a contribution in proportion to his resources. The kind of gift is not specified; everyone brings whatever he can or whatever he wishes, usually animals (sheep, beef, fowl, etc.), grain, and especially millet beer (dlo).

●782 During these general gatherings, from which no one is
796 excluded, only the high priest and the members of the council
778 enter the sacred grove or approach the genie's abode. There, the high priest makes known the purpose of the sacrifice: to thank the genie for his past favors; to offer him the gifts brought by everyone; and to ask him to continue to protect the community so that its prosperity may be assured. Then the victims are sacrificed, and their blood is sprinkled on the tree trunk or whatever object or place is reputed to be the home of the genie.

782 genie. The same is done with libations of dlo or the juice of
796 kola nuts. Since anything offered to the genie is supposed to be
[784] consumed on the spot, an orgy lasting for several days usually follows.

782 In addition to these two great obligatory ceremonies especially concerned with the exploitation of the land, the god's protection is sought by similar, but much simplified means in all affairs whether they concern the entire settlement (wars, disasters), a particular patriarchal or familial community, or even a single individual. Through the high priest as intermediary, the offering and the request are made for the purpose indicated by the petitioner, who often promises to make a further gift to the genie when his wish has been granted. Vows of this type are made very frequently.

794 The cult of his high [230] priests and of all the im-
769 portant men of the settlement is tied in with the cult of the genie, obviously a consequence of the fact that the genie is the spiritual patron of the community which honors him; its members are his children and with him form what amounts to a family. So, in line with what happens in a patriarchal or familial community, the territorial community also holds an annual festival for the dead, during which special honor is paid to noted personages, among whom deceased high priests have first place.

311 Exploitation of the land. The high priest in charge of
621 the cult likewise regulates everything concerning the exploita-
423 tion of the terrestrial domain of the genie, and in this capacity
793 he is known as the dugu-tigi (1), master of the earth. In this

1. In line with common practice, I shall henceforth use this title to designate both capacities, the high priest and the master of the earth.

office he has the help of the council of fa, and in important matters he must follow their advice.

With the help of this council, he allots the land when

857 use corporal punishment.

From this early age, therefore, a Bambara is subject to the corporate discipline which will henceforth dominate his whole life, for the same sort of discipline prevails in the adult brotherhoods.

857 The genie-protector is honored by offerings, [237] sacri-
292 fices, and ritual dances. When they perform these dances, the
[782] n-Tomo-den' take turns wearing the ceremonial mask and costume. The mask has the form of a human face surmounted by a number of vertical horns (five to eight of these) and decorated with a few cowries. The costume consists of a dloki (a kind of blouse with wide sleeves) and a pair of long trousers, which completely cover the body. If the costume is yellowish-brown (basa) or white (dye), the association is called "n-Tomo-fin' (black n-Tomo)" or "n-Tomo-dye (white n-Tomo)," respectively. Is this costume supposed to represent the adepts' conception of their protector's appearance? No. As in all sects, it is intended to differentiate the officiant from the profane world (1).

[536] 1. Some of these associations give a kind of public performance from which they derive profit. Notably, they exhibit a kind of puppet called peremperen' (dancers) which members of the n-Tomo manipulate in a more or less comical manner; often one of the puppets represents a man and the other a woman, and [831] their movements abound in the obscenities which are so popular with the onlookers.

831 A wooden phallus (or a small board) is commonly used to
857 summon the n-Tomo-den' to meetings. This is tied to the end
[534] of a rope and whirled like a sling, producing a noise which the operator can vary and which carries a considerable distance. This apparatus is called n-Tomo-ulu, translated as "dog of the
[195] n-Tomo." It should be noted that the words used in the brotherhoods usually have a double meaning, with a special sense under a vulgar form. For instance, the word ulu means both

857 "dog" and "the sexual parts of a man," and it seems evident
831 that the expression n-Tomo-ulu should be taken in the latter
195 sense. This is all the more likely since in the similar organization among the Khassonké the same apparatus is called khe-fengo, literally, "thing of a man," that is, "sexual parts of a man."

857 The great festival of the association takes place every
796 year after the harvest and does not differ essentially from the one celebrated at the same time by all the brotherhoods. It involves offerings and sacrifices to the genie-protector, communion by the n-Tomo-den' at a corporate banquet, and the admission of new members. The following is a detailed description. [238]

At the instigation of the n-Tomo-tigi, the brotherhood's field has been harvested and to the grain collected has been added whatever the boys could obtain from their families or friends by any means, even theft. From this millet the n-Tomo-
[273] tigi has had dlo (beer) prepared, which is drunk in great quantities on such occasions. The "elders" (koro-u), relatives, and friends can be counted on to send their contributions in kind.

Each n-Tomo-den' is given a little outfit appropriate to the occasion. The ceremonial costume is put in order; the dloki and trousers are washed and ironed, if need be, and the mask is rubbed with vegetable butter (si tlu) to give it gloss.

On the day set, everything is in readiness. Many gourds of dege (1) and to (2), numerous jars of beer (dlo), and also

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1. Dege is made by putting coarsely ground millet into a small quantity of water.

2. A native mush.

some kola nuts have been assembled, along with sacrificial victims.

857 The n-Tomo-den', each leading a chicken on a string,
796 go to the meeting place in single file, with the n-Tomo-tigi
● 782

857 and his syere at the head. There, the n-Tomo-den' squat at
796 a little distance from the n-Tomo-tigi, who takes his place in
782 front of them, facing the tree where the guardian genie dwells, in order to perform the libations and sacrifices. First he takes a small gourd and pours the dege it contains against the trunk of the tree; he cuts the throat of a chicken and dribbles its blood on the tree in the same way; next, in a jet of saliva, he spits on it the juice and particles of kola nuts which he has chewed for the purpose; finally, he fastens a few of the chicken's feathers in the smear of blood. As he makes each of these offerings, he says to the genie: "Look here, I offer you this chicken, protect us, defend us against the wicked and against evil genii. Give us enough to live well. Save us from illness. Give us rain to make our fields fruitful and be propitious to our families."

He speaks thus for everybody, after which each one comes in turn to offer his sacrifice and to make personal requests through him as intermediary.

857 The admission of new members follows. Each of them
796 pays his entrance fee and then, prostrate before the genie, swears never to reveal anything to the uninitiated, [239] above all to the women." If you betray your brothers," says the n-Tomo-tigi, "may the genie kill you!" The new member repeats: "May he kill me!"

[535] At this point the victims are cooked, and while they are being prepared, the n-Tomo-den' dance in turn, dressed in the ceremonial regalia. Their steps are accompanied by the beating of drums, and they twirl a flexible stick as they dance. When the victims are cooked, the banquet begins. Everyone eats and drinks as much as he can; a special treat of kola nuts brings the banquet to a close.

857 On this day each n-Tomo-den' is expected to take one of
796 his gifts or some other personal possession and make a present of
572 it to his n-golo-moso (1). This is how one names the young
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1. N-golo-moso, literally, "woman of the birth," is the companion associated with the rite which he is to undergo.

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terms nyana and boli are used interchangeably. This is natural enough since the latter is merely the symbol of the former.

Each nyana has a boli which in form and substance is peculiar to it. Anything may be used to make boli: horn or hair of the hare, hind, or cattle; nails or claws; animal venom or excretions. It is not unusual to find parts of a human body put to use. As the chronicle tells, the war drums of the ton-dyon' were elevated to the rank of boli and were then adorned with the craniums and jaws of human beings sacrificed to them. Often the ball tied to the end of a piece of rope or leather and used to beat the tabala [Tr., big drum] is a human hand which has been severed and wrapped in a leather cover.

[727 782]

Certain of the boli, particularly those of the Komo and the Kono, are said to be made of a child's torso; those of the Tyi-wara and Nama are made of wood, and those of the Duga of horn.

All sorts of shapes are employed: men, animals, doll-like figures, balls, small crowns, etc. The principal boli, called boli-de-n-fa, is accompanied by subsidiary ones called boli-de.

The boli is also given sex: one is male, another female; and it is said that there is a kind of mystical copulation [254] from which at the time of initiation are born the spiritual sons of the nyana.

Among boli should be noted those made of forked sticks, such as the n-Golo and the Tyi-wara, both patrons of brotherhoods of young men (1).

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1. If one makes certain comparisons, the forked stick seems to deserve special attention. Among the Khassonké, for instance, the soli-ma always build their seclusion hut (bire) with a forked post in the center. This post, called biri-makho (master of the hut), is a tree trunk chosen

794 [292] Some of the clergy use a disguise when officiating in public; furthermore, the ceremonies are held only at night.

[198] Finally, in the presence of the profane, the initiated use a special language for everything referring specifically to the cult. The greatest secret of all is the name of the nyana, [551] because anyone who knows the name has complete power over the spirit it designates.

794 298 From the point of view of the disguised clerical body, this secrecy is virtually impenetrable. A disguised person loses his human personality and is withdrawn from the natural world. It is an accepted fact that it is dangerous for those not affiliated to intercept his glance through the tiny openings in the mask; undoubtedly his person on that occasion is impregnated with a fluid whose emanations are fatal to those who, not being affiliated, are unprotected against them.

Some of these disguises include a headdress or mask and for the body a kind of costume usually made of long strips of vegetal material; is this, as has been suggested, simply a means of dominating the herd of adepts and even more the profane through the terror such regalia inspires when seen at night by the flickering light of torches and bonfires? It seems more probable that one must put this matter on the plane of the supernatural in order to understand it. Dangerous wild animals [825 776] are believed to be incarnations of evil and powerful gods, and an attempt is made to present an outward appearance consistent with the terror merely seeing them inspires, in order thereby to acquire the supernatural qualities that characterize them (1).

1. There is no doubt that some individuals, under the influence of the role of wild beast that they are portraying, have been led to commit actual murders during ritual observances. I have often heard this asserted in connection with the dyara (lion).

794 782 It should be noted that the costume, gestures, [259] dances, songs, and music of the dye-n-fa and their acolytes

794 are all designed to attract and capture the god and, for this
782 purpose, to transfer the officiant from our world to the super-natural one. I have never heard anyone claim that the costume and the various actions of the officiant were intended to counterfeit the nyana, nor that the boli in any way represented the native's idea of the god.

The Clergy

793 Even though, in theory, familial nyana are inherited, those worshiped by the brotherhoods are usually bought. The head of the brotherhood is called the nyana-tigi (master of the nyana) (1), whether he has inherited the office, been elected

1. Ordinarily the word nyana is replaced by the specific name of the nyana, Komo, Nama, Nya, etc.

to it, or has imposed himself by virtue of being the most prominent founder of the brotherhood. It is he who keeps the boli, hence his title of boli-tigi, and who knows all the secrets of the cult. His duty is to direct the cult and to administer the brotherhood, and this gives him considerable local prestige.

The initiates of higher rank are called dye-n-fa-u, "masters of the truth." The nyana-tigi chooses his aides from this group, particularly the person who, "seized by the god" [787 (wara-mina-den'), becomes the "oracle" (wara-da). The role 791] of medium requires special persons who can go into a trance under the influence of the animating spirit, and the wara-da has the duty of choosing and training the person who will succeed him or replace him, if the need arises (2).

2. These dye-n-fa students are called soma-de (elder sons) in the Komo brotherhood.

All the initiates are to some extent diviners through practices which are peculiar to them, and the brotherhoods often

794 in France. The question is too complex, however, to be treated here.

794 For important ceremonies, the faithful bring the nyana-
782 tigi a contribution in proportion to their means; each of them brings grain, livestock, fowl, cowries, cloth, etc., and no one is so poor that he cannot furnish one or more jugs of beer (dlo). Everything thus collected is offered to the nyana at the general meeting of the faithful through the intermediary, the nyana-tigi. In accordance with [264] established ritual, the victims are slaughtered and libations made. Then the nyana-tigi gives thanks to the god and asks him to continue to protect his worshipers. Finally, all or part of the food is eaten at a joint banquet. This is a true communion, by means of which the god and his worshipers on the one hand, and the worshipers among themselves on the other, are closely bound together. These banquets,
[786] which often last for several days, degenerate into orgies.

Internal Discipline

794 A result of the cult is that the brotherhood forms an organized body in which each member is subject to a discipline that may be summarized under these three terms: secrecy, obedience, solidarity.

Secrecy is obligatory, especially for anything having to do with the cult. Divulging the mysteries carries with it a
[688] punishment which, depending on circumstances, may vary from a simple reprimand to condemnation to death, with fines, flogging, etc., as intermediate forms. People who are known to be unable to keep a secret are, on that account, excluded from the brotherhoods of nyana; this excludes women, children, certain people of caste, etc.

The obedience required of the faithful is shown by the seemingly fantastic rules enforced during the official banquets of certain brotherhoods. Members are fined for very odd infractions: sitting down, getting up, spitting, etc., before being given permission or being asked to do so. This is obviously a means of swelling the common fund, but it is also a means of making the adept realize that he is subservient to the sect.

794 clergy. On the other hand, an innocent man will be over-
696 whelmed by mental and physical torture if he is unable to give his executioners what they demand.

681 Corporal punishment includes flogging, chains, starvation, torture, and death by all imaginable methods. Pecuniary punishment includes fines, confiscation, and pillage. The condemned man is also sometimes forced to labor for the clergy or is even enslaved by them.

Social and Political Role of the Brotherhoods

794 By its actions, the brotherhood, an artificial family,
776 tends to take the place of the natural family whose organization
769 it has borrowed and whose cult it has banished. It is easy to account for this.

The cult of the manes is the framework of the family and of the communities derived from it. The brotherhood has cleverly managed to set up such a cult by specially honoring the manes of its high priests, its famous members, and its eminent worshipers. [267]

Gradually, the nyana dugu-da-siri, protector of the territorial community, has given way to the nyana of the boli, a more powerful god since his territory is unlimited.

It is true that in spite of everything the tradition remains, and even though they are largely over-shadowed by the nyana of the boli, the manes of the ancestors and the nyana dugu-da-siri are still venerated. Though sowing and harvesting are celebrated
[731] with great pomp by the brotherhoods, still, when a disaster,
[782] epidemic, or terrible drought occurs, sacrifices are promptly offered to the manes and the gods of the place. People may fear their anger, but they also have confidence in their good will, and it is felt that their severity can always be tempered. On the other hand, the nyana of the boli are supposed to be basically evil, and their worship seems intended to ward off their malignity rather than to obtain their favor.

794 This duality in religion brings about extremely compli-
621 cated interrelationships which bind the communities and

794 over the threshold (2). The ceremonies are announced and
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2. Then the door is called su-bo-da, "exit of the corpse," and the sacrificer is called moso-bolo (literally, "woman's hand").

[534] accompanied by a strident, wild orchestra made up of drums (denu-ba) which are accompanied by iron instruments, called kinge, consisting of pieces of metal that are struck against each other or shaken to obtain sound from the rings attached to them. The "cry" of the Komo, which the wara-da shouts through his horn, is accompanied by a kind of reed pipe played by his companions.

• [782] There is nothing unusual about the offerings, sacrifices, or communion. The blood of the victim is used to wash the boli and the priests, as will be described for the Nama.

Processions held at night are always very effective, and they strike terror into the hearts of not only the uninitiated but also the initiated themselves. This long cortege, lighted by the torchbearers who shout and dash about like madmen while the wara-da gives the "cry" of the Komo, makes a very strong impression on everyone who sees or hears it (3). [273]

3. Elsewhere, the Komo meets in the daytime, and in the old days, notably in Bobo country, it was very popular (cf. Binger, Du Niger au golfe de Guinée [From the Niger to the Gulf of Guinea], Vol. 1, p. 379, and Monteil, De Saint-Louis à Tripoli par le Tchad [From Saint-Louis to Tripoli via Chad], p. 89). We have already seen that all the officiants in the brotherhood are called dou, "the hidden people," because of the disguises they affect. "The dou are persons ludicrously disguised, wearing clothing on which are sewed bits of da-fou (native

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794 if one had to travel, since the Dyuola [Diula] and other travelers were at the mercy of the whims and banditry of the [278] Nama-den' (1) and only avoided them to a certain extent by claiming

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1. Cf. Monteil, Binger, op. cit.; at the time of the great annual festivals of the Komo, all trading was halted for several days. Strangers could be sure of being respected only by claiming membership in the brotherhood. The same was true of the Nama.

to be of the Nama-den'. Even Moslems often became adherents of the Nama; all that was required of them was absolute secrecy and a few gifts in exchange for the secret passwords.

794 796 782 There are two great annual ceremonies: one at planting and the other at harvest, the dates for both decided by the Nama-tigi and his council. Each of them involves offerings, sacrifice, communion, and a nocturnal procession. Young members are usually admitted at the harvest ceremony.

The initiates gather for the sacrifice before the temple (Nama-bon'). Only the Nama-tigi and his clergy may enter the sacred place; the common worshipers remain outside. The sacrificial animals are brought up. Two sacrificers (muru-kala-tigi), naked to the waist, stretch their arms toward the four cardinal points and spit three times in each direction. Two dye-n-fa, also naked to the waist, hold the pieces of wood bearing horns and face the faithful. Three times the sacrificers utter the cry, "ture-dyo," twice alternating this cry with another, "dyo-Nama." They invoke the god two times, and then they slaughter the victims, sometimes inside the temple and sometimes outside.

The blood is carefully collected in receptacles, and the ashes of straw are added to it. All the cult objects, especially the boli itself, are smeared with the mixture. The Nama-tigi and the other principal initiates remove their clothing to anoint themselves with the same mixture and do not put on their garments again until the blood has dried on their bodies.

794 [787] Furthermore, every wara-mina-den' is able to read the will of the Nya and, more generally, to reveal the acts of the invisible by means of the divination practices which we have already mentioned.

[782] The sacrifices are performed by the muru-kala-tigi, and a dyeli (herald) serves as factotum, just as in the other brotherhoods. [285]

794 796 The faithful are initiated and called to participate in the cult to an extent determined by the clergy; they are called Nya-ko-den'-u, literally, "those who follow the Nya." In order to be admitted, an individual must give a chicken and 120 cowries. The next day, in the presence of the Nya-tigi and the wara-mina-den', the chicken is sacrificed on the boli by the muru-kala-tigi. The candidate is present, and in his behalf the Nya-tigi asks the Nya for protection against the suba, snakes, korti, and the evil eye. Then the neophyte is led to the sacred grove to be ritually purified with consecrated water contained in a vessel used exclusively for this purpose (1).

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1. Every year at the time of harvest, the clergy undergoes ritual purification by washing in the sacred water. When a Nya is inaugurated, this purification takes place at the first harvest after the installation.

The two great annual festivals are celebrated at the times [731] of planting and harvesting. Similar ceremonies take place in connection with important events (epidemics, public catastrophes, etc.). For these ceremonies, during which the Nya is supposed to give revelations about the event in question and to answer various other questions troubling the faithful, the wara-mina-den' [273] undergo special preparation and at the proper time drink a very heady beverage (2) which, they say, brings on their extra-lucidity.

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2. I learned most of these details about the Nya during a criminal trial brought against the wara-mina-den' of Soun-Bambara,

614 *173 Mamari had been elected by the ton'-den'; by means of successive usurpations, whose progress we have shown, he achieved a kind of despotism whose entire gain he was unable to hand down to his descendants, in spite of his wishes.

For his descendants, election followed their installation in office by the ton'-masa, who at the same time publicly announced the assent of the furu-ba-dyon' by a symbolic gesture in which he presented himself to the new fama wearing a loincloth around his neck and put its two ends into the hands of the fama. Under the protection of the deity called ba Kongo-ba, which Mamari had bought in Bendougou, an oath was taken which formed an unbreakable bond between the two elements of the clan.

The election of Tonmassa Dembélé as fama was the result of discussions following the coup d'état which he himself carried out, and it is probable that this election, too, was followed by an oath of loyalty on the part of the dyon'-kuntigi in one or another of the ways already described.

In the case of the successors of Tonmassa Dembélé, the choice of a new chief was preceded by gatherings at which it was announced that the place was vacant and open to the person who could take over Mamari's bow and quiver. Then the election was held, and it was followed by a ritual banquet.

614 *173 ●782 For this banquet, an ox and a slave were ritually slaughtered in the hut used as a temple for ba Kongo-ba (1), to whom

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1. A literal translation of the name was given to me, "Mother of the Great Bush," wherein "mother" is equivalent to goddess." There is an allusion to the ceremony described here in the journal of Isaac (second voyage of Mungo Park), which uses the name Kogno-ba, a variant of Kongo-ba.

the victims were sacrificed. The corpses were then cut into pieces, cooked together, and stirred frequently to make sure that they would be well mixed. A part of this macabre dish was served in the same hut and in the same gourd to the

614 dyon'-kuntigi who had acted as electors. When it was time to
•782 eat, they squatted on the ground around the gourd with their
*173 backs to it, and in this position and without turning their heads to make a choice, [305] they dipped into the dish and took a piece which might be animal or human. This meal constituted a communion by which those partaking of it were so closely linked that ba Kongo-ba was supposed to kill any one of them who should commit perjury by failing in the loyalty he owed to the man elected.

614 The choice made was then definitive, and the man elected
*173 was put through a test intended to indicate the length of his reign. To make this test, the newly elected chief's throat was wrapped in one of the cotton bands used to make native loincloths; two of the bystanders pulled the two ends in opposite directions while the victim feverishly plunged his hands into a gourd containing a mixture of small pebbles and ground baobab leaves. The number of pebbles he managed to pick out in one try was the number of years in his reign. When this number of years had passed, the fama was strangled with the strip of cotton. If his rule had been popular, however, he was left in office until the first complaint was lodged against him.

Such is the tradition. Though it is acceptable in essentials, it is less so in certain details when comparison is made with the chronicle which makes no reference to this uniform death by strangulation or to determining in advance the length of the reign.

One thing that is certain is the oath of loyalty which followed every election and which was also often demanded by the fama during the course of his reign. This oath unquestionably had a sacramental form, characterized by a communion under the patronage of the idol. What the chronicle has to say about the election of Ngolo Dyara shows that the man elected was also required to participate in the oath, thus making it reciprocal.
[661] Ngolo managed to avoid taking the oath, and so his electors bore the whole burden of it; this is one of the means by which despots of all lands pave the way for their tyranny.

534 beating surface. The most highly regarded was the denu-ba;
614 made of a hollowed cylindrical trunk with fairly thick walls,
701 the denu-ba is sometimes more than a meter high, with its lower third often slightly tapered with an adze. The drumhead is made of strong hide, reinforced in the center by a patch of leather sewed to it and stretched on pegs driven into the sides of the drum a few centimeters below the upper edge. When it is to be played, the drum is inclined on a fork that supports it. The drummer uses a kind of wooden hook, cleverly curved for elasticity and provided at one end [315] with a rounded part, often formed by a swelling contrived for the purpose or at other times made of a leather ball. The drummer's free hand provides the syncopation.

In certain cases, two denu-ba are used together; the drummer strikes them in such a way as to obtain a variety of sounds to form the basis for conventional harmony. Thus, the soldiers not only were trained to obey appropriate flourishes, but also were kept in touch with distant battalions by means of the drums. When it was skillfully played, the denu-ba made it possi-
[202] ble to transmit information for considerable distances, because other drummers would retransmit it in turn. That is why it has
[778] been said that the denu-ba can talk and no doubt why it was so highly regarded by the ton'-dyon' that they considered it an oracle and honored the god who spoke through the drum by making the denu-ba the boli of this god. Hence, human victims came to
[782] be sacrificed to the drums of the ton'-dyon', especially under Ngolo, according to the chronicle.

Trumpets (buru) were formerly made of ivory. The
[237] Tedzkiret speaks of the ivory trumpets used by a certain Bambara named Maro, and Mage relates that Ahmadou, Sultan of Ségou, gave the Bambara their ivory trumpets on the occasion of the Moslem festival.

These ivory trumpets, however, have disappeared, no
[237] doubt carried off by traders. Trumpets made of horn, which were used concurrently with the ivory instruments, have been substituted for them. The horns of the large antelope are much in demand for this purpose. An opening is made a few centimeters from the pointed end, and the trumpeter makes the sound through this opening. The only result is a loud but monotonous noise.

614 794 761 own action, as a possible daily eventuality which should cause no surprise.

The practice of this implacable ferocity must also be considered the natural source of that kind of burning faith, as intransigent as it is horrible in our eyes, which is capable of nullifying all the feelings of affection that we regard as natural. When Ngolo realized that he had aroused dangerous ambitions in his son Ntyi, he decided that he could not escape the danger he himself had created except by a sacrifice in keeping with the contingency, and with his own hand and without hesitation, he sacrificed Ntyi's son, his own grandson.

Stubborn Bambara are often heard to say: "You may kill me; I will not yield." Tyitya's resistance shows that this is no idle boast; this same affair also shows the aspiration toward equality, so basic in the Bambara, which makes it impossible for him to bow before his fellows. Another example of the same quality is to be seen in the resistance of the "elders" whom Mamari, even he, could subdue only by murder.

794 614 769 To complete the description of the somewhat mystical features of the clan of "those of Ségou," let us recall that after [321] Mamari's death he was honored by a cult: on the part of his natural descendants because he had been their fa; on the part of the people of the clan because he had been fama; and finally, on the part of the faithful of the idols' cult because he had been the high priest. Under this aegis there was a fusion of sorts of all the people who recognized mutual bonds because they were all spiritual sons of Mamari. This relationship was the excuse used by the ton'-dyon' when they usurped supreme power, and the right of the leaders of the ton'-dyon' to succeed to the office of fama was in fact settled by the expedient of treating this relationship as though it were true descent. This cult took its characteristics from the cult of the idols. When Tonmassa began his duties [783] as high priest, his first act was to honor the manes of Mamari, and the offering was the same as that always made to ba Kongo-ba when a new fama was elected: a man and an ox.

614 794 Such are some of the characteristics of the faith that united the "people of Ségou" by ties which, without metaphor, can be called bloody. It is true, of course, that the clan's

White oxen are sacrificed on the tomb; their hides are used to make new drumheads for the tabala, and the meat [328] is offered to the manes of the deceased and then distributed among members of the family, allies, familiars, etc. The women wail, weep, and sing the praises of the deceased in company with the people of caste who organize everything. Outside, banquets and virtual orgies, complete with noisy dances and songs, are organized in honor of the deceased.

This ceremony goes on for seven days.

At the close of this period, the new fama is publicly proclaimed. For this purpose, the leader of the slaves has the walled-up door of the tata reopened, and the whole company assembles in the large open area in front of the house of the fama. Those present include the newly elected fama, the members of the family of the Massa-si, allies, tributaries, heads of the ton'-dyon', and the sofa.

An ox has been sacrificed and offered to the manes of the defunct. Its hide is stretched in the center of an open area surrounded by the crowd, and on it is spread out the sheepskin, adorned with precious amulets, which has long served as a rug for the fama of the Massa-si. Other precious family relics include the scarlet cap adorned with amulets, twists of gold for the ears, and heavy silver bracelets.

The representative of the family of Kassi Konaré seats the newly elected fama on the sheepskin, puts the scarlet cap on his head, and adorns him with the gold earrings and silver bracelets. Then he makes a speech to the new fama, outlining the policies followed by his deceased predecessor and enumerating the desiderata of the people of the clan.

At this point the leader of the slaves prostrates himself before the new fama and places himself in his hands to show that all the ton'-dyon' are loyal to him. He then presents individually the principal groups of slaves, tributaries, etc.

Another ceremony brings the new fama, prominent Massa-si, their allies, the principal leaders of the slaves, and the tributaries to the wood sacred to the protective idol of the clan, where a reciprocal oath of loyalty is taken. A ritual communion follows.

Kola nuts are much prized by the natives;
222 their caffeine content makes them a stimulant and energizer. The
[276] Bambara use seven kinds of kola nuts in their sacrificial and
282 divinatory rites: 1. Dangoro (red nut); 2. Geleworo (white nut);
787 Sosokuworo (a red nut pointed at one end); 4. Flaniworo (yellow kola); 5. Worodanda (kola without opening) which has no apparent cleft where it may be split open; 6. Bassiworo (a dark red, bitter nut); 7. Ryeworo (nut of light and indeterminate color). (This list is given us by G. Dieterlen in her Essai sur la religion Bambara [Essay on the Bambara Religion]).

252 To prepare kola nuts, they are placed in baskets of very coarse mesh lined with leaves that are moistened every four or five days.

245 Among cultivated trees, other than banana, mango, lemon, orange, pineapple trees [ananas, may be a kind of pine; the pineapple is not a tree fruit], etc., one must mention the Acacia albida, which plays a large role in Bambara mythology. In the dry season, it is used as fodder for cattle.

[32] C. Textile Crops

248 Side by side with these food crops, the Bambara cultivate textile plants which they use in addition to the wild textile plants. Among the principal ones, we shall point out the da (Hibiscus
[227 cannabinus) whose fibers are used by fishermen to make their nets.
286] It does not rot and is a possible rival of jute. The labor to exploit it, pulling up the stalks, retting, extraction of the fibers, is done in the dry season, when many hands are available. (1)

1. G. Spitz, L'Ouest africain français [The French West African]. [Ed., L'Ouest africain, A.O.F. et Togo; The West African, French West Africa and Togo.]

Cotton, which grows spontaneously in many places, is cultivated near the villages as an annual plant; it is a perennial plant which renews itself every four or five years. During the cultivation cycle, it is grown between millet and maize. The harvesting is
[288] done by women; it is picked out and spun by women, but it is woven

462

Men	Women	Children	All

Medicaments

Preparation and application especially reserved to men	Rarely done by women if not to treat own sex

Religious Practice
(see Religion)

Reserved to men	Women rarely take part in sacrifices
[762] Make their personal sacrifices to the right of hut door	Make their personal sacrifices to the left of hut door

(When one faces entranc

2. Distribution of tasks according to Labouret.

Labouret, in Paysans noirs [Black Peasants], divides the work more specifically assigned to men and women as in the following table:

Men	Women	Common Tasks
Trapping	Gathering alimentary plants for domestic industry	
Maritime or deep-water river fishing	Shallow-water river fishing	
Preparation of the fish	Preparation and sale of the fish	Preparation and sale
Preparation of traps and hunting or fishing gear	Making women's fishing gear	

its seat in the prepuce and the clitoris, necessitating circumcision and excision). The body is conceived as being the support of all spiritual forces; each part is distinctly known [84] for its particular role. The body, like the spiritual principles, is bisexual; the boy is feminine in his prepuce, the girl masculine in her clitoris, and it is only after circumcision and excision that the man and woman can unite and realize the original fruitful twinship. On the metaphysical plane, there is identity between man, "seed of the world," and the cereal seed; the basic nutriments that are made up of the eight principal cereals are represented symbolically in men's clavicles. Finally, death separates all of these elements composing the person. The dya remains in the water where it will become the ni of the new-born in the family of the deceased; the ni is caught by the family head and transported to the altar where it will animate the dya of the new-born; the téré becomes nyama, a dangerous and vengeful force; it is deposited on the pembele, where it rejoins the ancestral forces. The body is buried and belongs to the termites. At birth, all the spiritual forces are transmitted again, whole, "refreshed," and purified. One being replaces another until the final resurrection.

C. Ritual, Sacrifice, and Cults

To appeal to and influence the spiritual forces, the Bambara use prayer, offerings, and sacrifices. Oral rites are used everywhere and at any time. "They pray to the sky, the cardinal points, the spirits; they sacrifice on stones, on the ground, on trees, by water holes, just as on altars sheltered in the sanctuaries or situated in public or private places. Every circumcized adult, father of a family, owner of a home and cultivatable land, is a sacrificer, a capacity emphasized by the red spot which sometimes is an ornament of the walls of the principal room in the man's residence." (1)

1. G. Dieterlen, Essai sur la religion bambara [Essay on Bambara Religion].

782 The blood sacrifice is the basic element of the rites. The
778 technique used for it has been described by M. Griaule (2). The

2. M. Griaule, "Remarques sur le mécanisme du sacrifice Dogon (Soudan français)" [Remarks on Sacrificial Techniques of the Dogon (French Sudan)], Extract from the Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. X, 1940.

Bambara have three types of altars: the wooden stumps called pembele, altars made of roughly hewn stone, which generally represent the ancestors; and the Nyama or boli, man-made objects representing the parts of the universe.

794 The cults can be individual and familial or general for the whole village, such as the dasiri and the dangu. They are organized by religious societies, dyo, whose object is to conserve the spiritual forces of their members. For the men, these societies are: the Komo (principally), the Kworé, the Nama, the Kono, the Nago, the Nya. The women are also grouped in dyo, as yet little known, while the uncircumcised are members of the N'Domo.

The Komo is a hierarchical society whose members have obligations and taboos, such as initiation for future dignitaries of the political and religious society, study of traditions and practices of the cult, study of the science of magic and religious formulas, fabrication and consecration of protective charms (boli-w, dyo-w), knowledge of [85] poisons and antidotes, procedures for combating enemies and sorcerers.

794 Its moral authority is very widespread, and we shall see the
796 role it plays in justice and public affairs. The Komo has obligatory seasonal ceremonies, such as the festival of the cleaning of the sacred wood by the tinto-w (most recent initiates), the festival of the emergence of the komo-sen-w from the stream, that of stream fishing and of hunting on the banks at the end of the dry season, and, finally, that of the solemn return of the komo-sen-w to the stream. In addition, every seven years, a great celebration in April-May lasts for 15 days, with a sacrifice to the komo-ba. The ceremony ends with
766 the nomination of a new komo-tigi (chief of the Komo), who will exercise his priesthood for seven years. He must die at the end of

856
the blacksmith. The doll is given the name of the dead infant, the
[304 child carries it with him to the circumcision, and, when he marries,
589 he buries the doll with a piece of wood representing the wife of the deceased.

845 Twins are replicas of Faro, their presence is beneficial, and they are considered invulnerable.

826 The albino is supposed to be the issue of sexual relations held
833 in sunlight, a breach of taboo. He, too, is a new being. His wanzo
904 is so active that the circumciser must take great precautions before operating on it.

826 He is considered to be endowed with special powers which
782 make him a choice victim for the sacrifices offered to the spirit of the water.

553 To the children of blacksmiths, the name is given near the
326 paternal forge in the presence of all the artisans. An old man prepares seven little sticks, giving each the name of an ancestor. Three of these are drawn at random from the group, and the third gives the name of the baby. The head of the baby is rubbed with the axe Kongobwona, and his shaved hair is soaked in sacrificial blood.

553 In the Bamako region two chickens or a sheep are sacrificed
782 to celebrate the name-giving. The distribution of the meat is made according to established custom. If it is a chicken, the patriarch receives the head and the gizzard, while the wing and white meat go to the old woman who washed the baby during the first eight days. If it is a sheep, the patriarch receives [91] the ribs (because they are a bulwark, and the patriarch is the defender of the village) and the heart; the blacksmith receives the shoulder; the infant's family gets the head (so that the infant will go ahead), the back (symbol of prosperity), and the limbs (supports one wishes the new-born to have); the blood which runs on the ground is destined for the infant's protective ancestors. Then the family divides the raw meat with the heads of family, and the old woman thus receives her part indirectly.

c. Circumcision

881 A male infant is born, but he still keeps (because of the
304 primordial twinship) the prepuce as the physical support of the female
831 sex. He will only be freed of this by circumcision. It is this operation that definitively determines his sexual qualification and renders him fit to contract marriage.

[i.e., the surviving child of twins. -Analyst]

181 the kingdoms from each other; for him a mineral is not a vegetable
811 nor a vegetable an animal. He differentiates between the animate
772 and the inanimate and does not confuse the genera and species. But has he known how to establish a definite, clear, and well-demarcated line of distinction between man and the rest of creation? No, he bases his ideas of all things on himself or, to be more definite, on what he feels and believes himself to be. In addition to genii and spirits, he sees conscious forces and energies everywhere in nature. He cannot define these forces; his ideas on the subject are confused and indefinite. But, nevertheless, it is true, that he attributes a glimmer of reason and feeling to everything. Obviously the black man does not attribute a soul -- in the sense that we understand it -- to everything; nor does he say that everything is the home of a genie or a spirit; yet he cannot conceive of pure matter. He finds instinct in animals and special virtues and properties in plants. In inert matter he encounters phenomena which he cannot explain, and since he always uses himself and his reasoning as the basis of comparisons, he endows everything with the immaterial, invisible, imperceptible attributes of reason and feeling. In his mind I repeat, matter is not a soul, or a genie as he conceives of one; yet it is a being, a force, a power that has its own existence and the ability to act of its own accord. Here are a few examples taken from a thousand:

811 In July, 1908 at the time when the crops were sprouting, cer-
731 tain regions of the Ségou circle were invaded by tiny caterpillars
782 measuring barely 0.025 meters in length. They were a beautiful
825 velvety black with pale green lines on their sides; they came from the east out of no one knows where and myriads of them proceeded toward the west in serried ranks. Wherever they passed everything was eaten, and the eleusine /African millet/, corn, and sorghum had to be resown.

While these creatures were devouring the crops, the Moslem cried his insignificant formula toward the east and repeated, "God is great." He prostrated himself, crouched on his heels, devoutly shaking his forefinger, but all was in vain, for the quivering black wave continued to draw back on itself, to hump its back, and then to grow longer /14/; it continued to advance and to grow. The pagan

whitened the front of his dwelling with a mixture of millet flour and water that had been offered to the shades of his ancestors, and poured chicken blood here and there; then he thought it best to meet in council and consult his sorcerers. The same orders were given everywhere: a potentate, perhaps a prince, doubtless of the caterpillar people, was celebrating his wedding and respects must be paid to him. All the pagan villages did so, and the marriage of the caterpillars took place one fine morning at daybreak. Two or three caterpillars were placed at the bottom of old worn-out gourds and carried far up a path on the west side and out of the village by a procession of women and girls, singing and dancing, and preceded by furiously beating drums. They placed the little creatures on a spot determined by the elders and, after a wild dance they made their farewells, foolish farewells, stupid perhaps and yet nevertheless touching. For if the young people called to them with a long burst of laughter: "I na somaon fo (you will greet your people)," and some old shrews in a tone of command cried: "Ta so! (Go home!)," there were more who said to them: "Toumouni (little caterpillar), an bi déli (we implore you) have pity on us, go back now to your kingdoms; everything is eaten, and there is nothing left. Go, bring greetings to the people of your family, greet them all and greet them well."

They continued to come through for at least eight days, but their number decreased and a storm came and swept them away. Every Bambara will tell you that these caterpillars do not talk, that they have no soul. And yet if you try to make him understand that he has rendered them futile, useless, childish honors and that they could neither enjoy his music and songs nor understand his prayers and supplications, he will shrug his shoulders: "Tigné o (you are right)," he will tell you with a mocking air, and cutting your talk short will add: "Ou tara!", and one who knows the Bambara will guess the full implication: "Nevertheless, they left."

In August, 1908 a large part of the population of the villages located in the environs of Ségou spent the day of Friday the twenty-eighth in sweet idleness. Since I knew that a Kono fetish brought by its masters to recruit initiates was going from village /15/ to

776 In a word, "if you must work your wickedness on someone or on something, let it not be on our persons or on what belongs to us."

The spirits of the first group are gnéna (1), better known under

> 1. Women and also children often refer to both the djiné and the boli under the generic term gnena, and in the presence of the uninitiated, initiates use these words without making any distinction. It is nonetheless true that the word gnéna denotes a genie called djiné, and the word gnâ a genie called boli.

the name of djiné (Arabic word الجن imported by the Moslems), and those of the second are gnâ, or boli.

As conceived of by a black man, the gnéna, or djiné, are not strictly speaking angels; they are beings intermediate between angels and men. Not only do they eat, drink, procreate, pursue well-being and wealth, they are also /31/ subject to the physical and mental suffering that afflicts human beings, and can die as the victims of the hate, vengeance, or wickedness of a stronger being. Their priests [793 782] are the gnéna-n-sonna or dougoutigi (village chiefs whose jurisdiction is religious and often also civil), and the sacrifices which are offered to them are addressed indirectly and in a very vague and very confused way to a Supreme Being. This vagueness and confusion is apparent especially at the present time, since all ideas of the Divinity are disappearing more and more every day; but it is likely that, in the beginning, God had a greater part in the honors rendered to His deputies, to those whom He appointed as guardians of the elements, dividing among them the empire of His creation.

The djiné remain subject to the authority of the Creator. They have not cast off the yoke and, wicked though they may be, they have not ceased to be good. If they wish, they can do good, protect men, and grant them favors. They punish and chastise because they are above all responsible for the welfare of humanity.

776 829 contact with the genii and know their family names, or diamou; however little they may be at ease with a Frenchman they will beg him to show them the place where a well should be dug, convinced that we know where live the spirits who are appointed to watch over water. Do we not bear them a certain resemblance?

776 The gnâ, or boli, also are sexed; they reproduce and found families. They are superior to the genii in power and wickedness, and, except indirectly, capable only of evil. They are at open war with God who, without taking away any of their intelligence or liberty, has condemned them tosuffer and to undergo the punishment of fire. They continually set up ambushes against the djiné to make their plans, good or evil, miscarry; they take pleasure in tormenting men, and the Bambara fears them greatly. The worship of the djiné is nothing compared to what is accorded them. Those considered most powerful have an entire retinue to serve them and to render them [651] honors and, as will be seen later, the head tax of 3.50 francs per head is nothing compared to the sums the Blacks spend to ward off the blows of the boli and avoid their wrath.

Like the djiné, the boli appears in human form, but it is disgusting and hideous to behold. All those upon whom the favor of an appearance is bestowed are frozen with terror; the body of the boli is terrifyingly black, and its face disappears in a flame above which rise horns.

[782 822] In the sacrifices to the boli the liturgical colors are black and red, and a white victim is never offered except in an indirect sacrifice necessitated by an offering called saraka, which is quite rare. /33/

2. Sorcery and Priesthood

152 Surrounded by spirits, by genii always seeking to harm him, a Bambara is quick to believe that he is the victim of one. This attitude contributes more than a little to give him a certain endurance manifested in the face of suffering. I would even say that he usually bears suffering, not with stoicism but with the torpor of an animal.

152 After all, what can one do about an evil that cannot be exorcised except to bear it? What can one do against a powerful being that cannot be disarmed? Nevertheless, in the depth of his being he feels a need to enjoy himself (and enjoyment for him consists in drinking, eating, sleeping, and procreating); therefore he feels a horror of all suffering and neglects nothing that can protect him from it. In order 751 to live in peace, he reddens everything a little with blood and covers 789 his body with grigris or good-luck charms, with talismans that change the course of things and even of nature, and lastly amulets which will forearm him against poison, help him avoid an accident, cause the sorcery of the malicious to miscarry, send away the gnâma of the genii, of the living and the dead, and prevent the unknown forces which are found more or less everywhere in nature from taking hold of the wearer. For this protection they address themselves to the priests of the djiné and the boli, and especially to the sorcerers who have close contacts with the genii and are the mediators between man and the entire invisible world.

776 Since the Bambara conceived the visible and invisible world as 782 similar to what he believes himself to be, he has come to believe quite naturally and without any effort that the genii can be seen and conversed with their language understood and, finally, that it is possible to subjugate the forces of nature and hold them in one's power. By making offerings and sacrifices or causing them to be made through the intermediary of a priest, he can win a spirit's favor and thus lessen his fears and terrors. But if the spirit is weak, they will be ready to withdraw their attentions; it must be equal to the one feared and if possible outdo it.

778 It is force, or, to use their term, fanga, that governs each 791 person's conduct toward his neighbor; to be obeyed, a man must first cause himself to be feared, and only a powerful man will succeed and see everything yield before him. /34/

The Negroes have seen people of low birth and poor family succeed in increasing their property and become rich to the point of where they have servants and slaves and dominate a whole village, a whole tribe, or a whole people. Since they like to reason from

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789

and metamorphoses. Although I have no precise data, this coincidence leads me to think that the same is true of cannibals of the Ubangi.

782 To be convinced one need only be present at the sacrifices; no matter whether the offering is to the djiné genii, the boli genii, or to the shades of ancestors, there recurs, always, the phrase: "Deliver us from the souba and the gné-fla." One of the chief functions of the boli fetishes is just this, and there are some whose special and primary role is to make war against the Siri genii. One of these fetishes is the Nama, a powerful boli which is greatly honored, venerated, and, I should say, fashionable in the Ségou circle and among all Mande peoples. The Ngouansa, known especially in the Worodougou, is also said to specialize in this sphere. From time to time it makes its appearance in the Ségou circle, and its owner without fail does his bit of business and fills his purse. People run to him from all sides bringing hens, goats, and kola nuts, and I have seen these Ngouansa tigi, or masters of a Ngouansa, red with blood after spending the entire morning sacrificing. Before cutting their victims' throats, they stand, facing east with arms akimbo, and shout at the tops of their voices: "Souba, you are dogs, you are even less, the excrements of dogs, oubou bo."

791 825 824 Would the name of the souba and the gné-fla be heard so often from the lips of the Negroes, would families, villages, and sects /41/ spill so much blood or offer so many kola nuts, if they did not sincerely believe in them? Not only do they find an irrefutable proof of the possibility of metamorphosis in the fact that the caterpillar turns into a chrysalis which becomes a butterfly, they will also tell you that the winged termite, "that short-lived creature which on winter evenings comes in swarms around the lights, scattering wings everywhere, in the soup and on the plates," buries itself in the ground, swells like a sorghum seed, grows roots, and becomes a graceful shrub and then a beautiful tree provided it is spared by fire. I do not know the scientific name of this shrub or tree, but the Negroes call it sandéré.

761 "Koroya do, it is old age," but let us allow them to finish their sentences and continue their thoughts "a ko toun kadi Komo yé, he was beloved by the Komo," -- "à ko toun kadi Kono yé, Nama yé, Douga ye, he was beloved by the Kono, the Nama, the Douga," etc.

761 When people pass by holding a rooster or hen by the feet one may wonder where they are going; if one follows, one finds that they
● 782 are going to the temple of a fetish, there to sacrifice and to redden
776 their god with blood. "A toun koromé Alla séra à ma, he was old and God came to him," is an expression which is rarely on Bambara lips. When it is heard, it is used with a very special meaning; it signifies that the old man in question was a good man, beloved by all, even by God, but by no means that God killed him. The sacrifices made on this occasion clearly demonstrate this, for they are all directed to a fetish. If God alone were the cause and not the fetishes, the family of the deceased would refrain from all sacrifice; at the very most, it would offer a saraka by order of a sorcerer, but even the saraka offered to God -- and they are offered to Him -- is not a sacrifice, as we shall see later.

761 The priests of a djiné fetish and the owners and priests of a boli
778 fetish have the consolation that they always fall under the blows of the genie which they hold and to which they sacrifice. As for other mortals, 80 times out of 100, and one might say even more without exaggerating, they are killed by a boli fetish. The Komo, Kono, Nia, Nama, and Douga fetishes etc., are the chief murderers, and entire villages are often decimated by them.

761 Although they are able to deliver blows on their own initiative,
578 they are often only intermediaries, the agents of a depraved will to
674 which they have offered their services; almost always there is either
754 a thrown poison, korti, or a poison that is poured, dounkono. Thus sorcerors are consulted at every death; one is sought through their mediation. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth is the great maxim for the Bambara as for the Jews, and vengeance must be taken on the one who was able to win over the good graces of a fetish and force it to bring suffering or mourning into the bosom of a family. This vengeance is obtained through the intermediary of a fetish, and

776 In the mouths of the Bambara, the name of God is only a word!
782 Although they acknowledge Him as sole and sovereign master of all things, Who created the visible, the invisible, and all that exists, although they believe Him capable of rewarding the good and punishing the evil even in this world (but suffering and death are rarely, or practically never, attributed to Him), they do not dream of praying to Him or invoking Him, and they who redden everything a little with the blood of victims leave God without an altar, without a priest, and without a sacrifice. They address Him directly only when ordered to do so by a sorcerer; and then they comply through fear, because they are forced to -- "djakoyala, by force," as they say so well, and their hearts are not in it.

They appeal to the Almighty Being indirectly, through the mediation of the fetishes called djiné, but actually this indirect appeal is barely noticeable -- their knowledge has been dimmed and is becoming dimmer each day, and the created has replaced the uncreated. As I will explain when speaking of the worship of the djiné genii, the mediator between the Bambara and the Divinity has risen to the detriment of God; He has been eclipsed and the mediator has taken His place.

000 This evolution of the Negro is in no way an ascending one; it is actually a decline, for from a more perfect state they have descended to a /63/ less perfect one, and from the less perfect they have arrived at a discord in which they bury themselves a little more every day. This is a strange evolution which in no way recalls the theories of rational evolutionists.

776 I have said that the Bambara address God directly by order of
782 a sorcerer, and from time to time an individual, a family, or an entire village can be seen at a crossing of paths, in a bare spot outside the village, or sometimes even in the village under one of the great trees that shade the square, offering Him /millet/ flour mixed with water, hens, goats, and kola nuts. That is the saraka.

2. The saraka

782 Europeans -- civilian, military, or of the church -- easily confuse a saraka with a sacrifice, no matter how much they know of Bambara ways and customs. They do not even see that there is a difference, since sometimes it involves the shedding of blood. But even a bloody saraka is not a sacrifice; I even deny it the name of offering, for it is a tax, a tribute, and in my opinion that is the only appropriate name for it.

782 791 Private or public, with or without bloodshed, it is always performed on the express order of a sorcerer who, as we know, has intimate relations with the world of spirits and learns from them what the Divinity demands. When a sorcerer speaks and gives his oracles they are obeyed and carried out, so greatly are his threats feared, and it is all done "djakoyola, because forced." The saraka is given under his orders as the tax is given to the head of the circle.

782 778 In the eyes of the Bambara the saraka has no other character than that of a tax, a tribute paid either to the Divinity or to the fetishes. In February, 1907 the rumor spread in the villages around Ségou that the Komo fetish of Sioribougou had spoken. "Quick, give Death a hen through me in a saraka," the fetish said. "It is preparing to decimate you, and the only way left for you to disarm it is to give it a hen." The sorcerers confirmed this folly, the masters of the Komo found it to their taste, and not one head of a family dared refuse the hen that Death demanded. So they offered it, and the formula on this occasion was this: "The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to offer /64/ Death a white hen as a saraka. Komo, so-and-so makes this offering for himself and his family through your mediation; it is his saraka. If the wind blows from the east, may this hen preserve him from it! If it blows from the west, may it also preserve him! If the wind blows from the Ouorodougou (the country of the kola nut, the south), may this hen deliver him from it, and if it blows from the north may it deliver him from it also!" Cutting the hen's throat, the sacrificer of the Komo then added, reddening his fetish: "This is a saraka, the saraka which so-and-so gives to Death on behalf of himself, his wives, his children, and his friends.

782 The Komo of Sioribougou has ordered us to do this; its mother,
778 M'gouni Domba, informed it that we owe this saraka to Death."

782 The saraka, a term derived from the Arabic word (صدقة) meaning "alms," is no less than compulsory giving of alms to God, the djine genii, or to ancestors upon orders of a sorcerer; it really is a tax, a tribute which cannot be avoided and which is offered and presented (1) to the invisible beings.

1. Saraka di, "to give a saraka," is the Bambara expression.

A saraka is in no way a sacrifice, even when it involves bloodshed. Cutting the throat of a hen, a dog, or a kid does not in itself constitute a sacrifice, for otherwise we would have to conclude that every butcher and every cook sacrifices. He who cuts the throats must have the intention of making a sacrifice, and this intention is so essential that it is always expressed by the Negroes: "soni do, this is a sacrifice," he says as he makes the knife thrust. In performing a saraka, it is important for the officiant to say that he is not sacrificing, so he expresses his intention in the words: "saraka do, this is a saraka," and all present repeat after him: "saraka do, this is a saraka."

In every sacrifice there is a priest, and the responsibility is especially entrusted to him, but in the saraka there is no priest strictly speaking. Doubtless when a saraka is given by a village or a family, the head of the village or of the family is asked to officiate, but this is done out of deference, or by necessity if the saraka involved is given indirectly through the mediation of a fetish. In the case of a direct saraka the sorcerer himself can designate the person who should give it, and anyone, man or woman, is eligible; they need only be either circumcised or excised. Obviously, a woman is /65/ never [562] chosen for a public saraka. Where a man is available, a woman must step aside, and in order to safeguard the principles of the hierarchy a respected old man, an elder, is chosen in the absence of a priest.

At the end of a public sacrifice the sacrificer usually receives a choice morsel and the skin of the animal, and those present roast

782 the meat and eat it on the spot. When a saraka is given, barring a very special order by the sorcerer, meats, millet flour, kola nuts, and cowrie shells are left on the spot, and only the poor may take and eat them. Most frequently, the children of both sexes are called, and it is they who devour the meats and the flour. As soon as this food has been received, the leftovers are gathered and placed in a corner formed by two paths that meet or cross. When a saraka is offered by the whole village, a goat is almost always slaughtered, and the skin, folded in four or six ply, is tied with gnama fou (1), and then hung

[824] 1. Bouhinia reticulata, commonly called "tree of Judea."

on the end of a pole at the entrance of the village.

A saraka is never given to the boli fetishes; it is given to djiné fetishes and to God. It may, or may not, involve bloodshed, and it may be given directly or indirectly. A direct saraka can be given by anyone, and by either a man or a woman; they need only be circumcised or excised, depending on their sex. But to offer a saraka, indirectly through the mediation of a djiné genie or of a boli (a boli is never intermediary in a saraka given to God), the owners and sacrificers of the djiné and boli genii must officiate, for they alone have the privilege of speaking and appealing directly to these gods. In saraka of this sort two simultaneous and distinct acts are always performed; in the case of a saraka involving bloodshed there is no doubt on this subject. The saraka animal has its throat cut in front of the fetish chosen as intermediary, and this fetish takes the responsibility of telling the rightful one that this slaughtering was done as a tribute or tax presented to him. And this procedure is in no way illogical, for it is not at all the flesh and bones of the animal that are given to the invisible being; it is the animal's life, the blood which contains its ni, or life. Two things are given in a saraka -- the material and the immaterial, and when it is indirect /66/ blood must necessarily be spilled for the benefit of the mediator, so that he can lay hands on the life of the animal given in tribute and offer it to the rightful one.

182 The saraka is the Bambara's only direct religious act toward
776 their Creator and sovereign Lord. Although it is often performed and presented in the corner formed by two paths that fork or cross, it may be given anywhere, and I was right in saying that the Bambara God remains without priest, altar or sacrifice, and, strictly speaking, without worship.

776 3. The Bambara Belief in God is not of Islamic Origin any more
777 than are their Ideas on Heaven, Hell, and the World of Invisible Beings (1)

1. Cf. J. Brun of the White Fathers, "Notes sur les Croyances et les Pratiques religieuses des Malinkés fétishistes /Notes on the Religious Beliefs and Practices of the Malinke Fetishists/," Anthropos, II, pp. 952-954.

772 Bambara notions of God, heaven and hell, and the world of
776 invisible beings conform so closely to the teachings of the Koran,
777 that we ask ourselves first of all if they were not received from the Moslems. Our surprise increases even more when we begin to study these people, for with respect to religion the only terms in which they can express themselves in present-day language are purely and exclusively Arabic. This is a fact, and the similarity is very easy to establish.

The angels -- Bambara méléké, Arabic malā'ika ملائكة -- are spirits -- Bambara hakili, Arabic 'aqal عقل --, superior to the genii -- Bambara djiné, Arabic el-djin الجن --, beings intermediate between men and angels and to whom God has entrusted the custody of the elements. The good angels are in paradise -- Bambara ardjana, Arabic El-djanna الجنة -- up there in the blue sky and constitute the heavenly court of the Creator and sovereign Lord of all things, God -- Bambara Alla, Arabic Allah الله --, the cause of good and evil. God rules seven heavens and seven terrestrial globes placed one above the other, and the wicked angels

771 If the Bambara have fought to safeguard their independence,
181 they have done so primarily to preserve their faith and keep their fetishes. They have shown such great attachment for these, that their
[101] conquerors have described them as rebels and applied to them the epithet Bamba, synonym of Kafri. These religious struggles in themselves allow us to state as an indisputable fact that before the arrival of the Moslems the Bambara were animistic and sacrificed to genii. /69/

776 Did they have an exact and precise idea of their genii as they
811 do now? Apparently yes, for they always reasoned using themselves as a basis of comparison so that in their minds the invisible, impalpable genii to whom they sacrificed had a striking resemblance to man. It is not a man, and yet it is one, they say unable to define their concept or idea, ma si fa do (1).

1. Ma; "man"; si fa' "certain kind"; do; "it is."

776 The Moslem word djin translates this idea precisely, and the
●782 Bambara use it in everyday language; but when the day of the sacrifice comes, they become unaware of it and there remains only one word -- ma, meaning "man." When they redden with blood the bark of
[824] the baobab (Adansonia digitata), the tamarind tree, the false cedar (family of the cedrelaceae), etc., to obtain the good graces and protection of the genie who dwells there, they always confer on it the title ma ("man"), and never that of djine. "Ma n'zira ba, ma n'tomi ba, ma djala ba; O great baobab man, O great tamarind tree man, O great false-cedar man!" begins the formula used by the sacrificer in offering victims and millet flour to the genie (2). They also have

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2. In /J. Henry/, "Culte des esprits chez les Bambara /Spirit Worship among the Bambara/," Anthropos, Vol. III, No. 4 (1908), p. 1 /p. 702/, note 1, there is an error in translation.

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Ma n'zira ba, etc., does not mean "great baobab of man." The real meaning is: "O man who is a great baobab." In writing it I prefer a "z" to an "a." Usually the Bambara soften the hard sound by a euphonious little "n." With a hard "s" the word sira cannot be distinguished from the word "tobacco": sira siramougou, "snuff tobacco"; n'ziremougou, "baobab flour."

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776 a purely Bambara term to express their idea /of these spirits/, and
782 they to the word djiné; they call them gnéna.

776 Before the arrival of the Moslems, the Negro sacrificed to beings
782 to whom they have attributed bodies and souls, although imponderable
177 and invisible, who are intermediate between men and angels and whom
798 the Arabs call الجن el djiné. But they also sacrificed to evil beings, superior to the former in power, whom they call boli. The legend of the boli, an ironic legend which I will tell in full when I discuss this matter, is sufficient proof of this belief. For the Moslems of the Sudan only two things here below /70/ are worthy of attention: Mecca (Makka) and Stamboul -- old Abdul Hamid, Sultan of Constantinople -- who in their eyes, as in the eyes of all Moslems of our colonies, is the great Pope of Islam. Everything that does not bear the stamp of Mecca, everything that does not come from Stamboul, is to be rejected and scorned. Thus the Bambara, fertile in expedients, quickly managed to find a way out of their discussions with the propagators of Islam: "All our boli come from Mecca," was their weapon of war.

776 The Bambara were pursued from every side, unable to perform
177 publicly even religious ceremonies in honor of simple genii. Can
798 one believe that they added others that were still more terrible? As conquerors the Moslems have always ruthlessly opposed idolatry, destroying its temples and overthrowing its altars. "Believe or die" has always been their motto and always will be as long as they feel

out of the Bambara's need to soften their crime of idolatry and to preserve it by lending it extenuating circumstances. If the cradle of Islam is Mecca, if its superiority is derived from the holiness of that city, chosen and beloved by God (1), what can the Moslems want of

1. See what I said above on the subject of Mecca and Stamboul.

him, the Bambara, whose religion comes from this same much vaunted city? And if the God of Whom the Moslems preached to the Bambara has decreed everything (2), good and evil, if He is the Author of both

2. See the Koran: VI, v. 3 - 39; X, v. 99; XIV, v. 4; XVII, v. 32; XXXVI, v. 6, 7, 8, 9; LIII, v. 43, 44, 45 - 49; LXXVI, v. 29; LXXX, v. 29; etc.

good and evil and leads each person along the course that pleases Him to such a degree that he no longer has freedom of choice, why wish to take from them that which God has given them, that which comes to them from the holy city of Mecca!

The Bambara term for the boli is gna. Their idea of them corresponds closely to the Arab concept of the chéitane شيطان, and in everyday language, they define them by a single word: sétané, [92] "satan," even though this word is never on their lips in the sacrifices. In their nocturnal orgies and religious dances, the Negroes' notion of the genie to which they are sacrificing are shown in concrete form. And when, in their religious ceremonies in honor of the Komo, Kono, [118] Nama, etc., the spirit appears by the glow of little fires lit in the sacred woods, decked out in a cloak of feathers, his head hidden in a huge horned mask that has nothing human about it, one cannot help thinking of the tales of old Breton grandmothers, told on a winter evening in the stables. The blasting of trumpets, bamboos, and koba horns (3), the tinkling of /72/ the little bell, and the shouts of the

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3. Formerly the trumpets and horns were ivory. The Moslem tyrants quickly had them confiscated, no doubt because they knew the price of an elephant tusk. At present the Bambara use only cattle horns and those of the koba, a large antelope which grows to the size of a fine heifer. (Koba is the word that designates this antelope in the Peul language; the Bambara call it dadjé, "white mouth," no doubt because it has two white lines on its jowls.)

crowd grip and terrify you and make you think yourself transported into the midst of a sabbath of long ago. When one has been present at these scenes, one does not doubt the veracity of the Negroes who say: "When the boli appears it is hideous and freezes with fear whoever sees it. It is as black as soot and its face disappears in a flame above which there are horns."

776 796 782 The face disappearing in a flame inevitably recalls the idea of an infernal spirit, and one who has been present at certain sacrifices to the Komo and the Nama, for example, and has heard the blasphemies of the sacrificer no longer doubts that it is Satan himself that is worshipped here. The blasphemies are repeated by all those present: Alla k'an bla, "may God leave us" (the real meaning: "We do not want God"); Alla djampa ba, "God is a great traitor" (meaning: "God makes promises and does not fulfill them, since he has decreed everything and his decrees are immutable"; A yé né djampa, "he has betrayed me," says a Negro of someone who has made him a promise and has not kept it). One is further convinced by being present at the sacrifice to Touafé Bla (1), one of the most ancient boli. The

1. The name Touafé Bla undoubtedly comes from the custom of suspending

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this boli from the belt and hanging it at the side along the thigh.

three most famous sorcerers, whose names -- Makono, Tjewolo, and Tjéba -- have been preserved, but whose origin is lost in the dark of ages, sacrificed to it by preference. This is the formula:

"Touafé Bla, Touafé Bla, the mountain of Touafé Bla is known, the trees of this mountain are known, I want to speak of the fire of its mountain. Touafé Bla, spare some houses (meaning: 'those of my friends') and go and kindle (your fire) in others (meaning: 'cast ruin and desolation among my enemies, among those who wish me ill'). Touafé Bla, favor me, and if I cannot see your fire, Touafé Bla, let me at least see the tip of its long column of smoke (meaning: 'you live in the fire; I cannot see your dwelling, but I can still know your power through the smoke of your fire, that is to say, /I shall know it/ if I am a witness of the misfortunes which you will cause to fall on my enemies and those whom I hate')." /73/

This formula shows us clearly that the boli, or gnâ, live in fire. The Negroes sacrificed to them before the arrival of the Moslems, and gave concrete form to their concept of the infernal spirit, just as they do today, by decking themselves out in a hideous horned mask and a cloak of feathers. Their blowing and shouting in the sacred woods on the days of great orgies have remained the same, and al-
[192] though they have taken the words sétané شيطان and djahanéma جهنم from the Moslems, they have had the concept for a long time.

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Now then, as to the Bambaras' knowledge of the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Ruler, Lord of all, do they owe it to the Moslems?

The Bambara have too hierarchical a nature to need a master here! The youngest child is always the slave of the next older brother, who is the slave of an older one, and so the progression moves up invariably without ever changing, to the grey beard, the elder, the tjekoróba, a real fetish whom everyone obeys, whatever his stupidity, his narrowness of mind, or his lack of judgment.

In every family there is the same progression: the immediate lord of the children is their father, while he in turn bows before his

776 and for all, and since then He has simply lived, resting in sweet "idleness" .... Let us not think, however, that the Negro is without religion; he is excessively religious and he spends his life sacrificing, squandering flour, and scattering the blood of victims uselessly, for the sole benefit of vultures.

Believing that he can expect nothing from God, he calls upon the djiné or gnéna who are in charge of the elements, each having absolute power in its sphere. Doubtless the latter are unable to change the whole universal order established by the Creator and Soverign Lord of all things -- au tigi ("our Lord") ani fen /85/ bé tigi yé ("and Lord of all things") --, but they can grant a material (1) blessing, turn away

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1. A Negro does not have the idea of asking a supernatural blessing.

a misfortune, and reward or punish.

The gnéna is reminiscent of the djin of the Koran (Chap. VI, XXX, VIII, XLI). It is a being intermediate between men and angels. "Ma si fa do do, it is a kind of man," say the Negroes, and in fact it does resemble a man since it eats, drinks, amuses itself, marries, and has children. /2/ Many even believe them /gnéna/ to be clothed,

2. In the sacrifices it is called ma, "man," and the name of the object in which it is found is added to this word. Thus ma djala ba, "great false-cedar man," etc. /No text reference to this footnote. Tr:/

and in the late evening it is not unusual to hear a storyteller /conteur/ say of them: "Sanou b'oufé. Wari b'oufé. Bagi fana b'oufé. They have gold. They have silver. They also have fabrics." Above all they have might! They are powerful, and although some people wear 776 751 little bags of cloth or leather and strings with seven and nine knots -- as amulets --, and claws of wild animals, deer and goats horns, tafo

776 3. Gnéna Who Roam the Village and Its Environs

These gnéna like especially to sit where paths cross and somewhat resemble the gnâma, even though they are different (2). They

2. See what I said about the gnâma in the first chapter.

protect from spells and sorcery, give health and exorcise sickness, and it is not unusual in the morning at daybreak or in the evening just as the sun is about to disappear to see men and especially old women sprinkling a little clear water here and there at a crossing of paths. They are interceding for children and grandchildren or for a member of the family who is sick and lying on his mat, or they are imploring the gnéna to protect them from an enemy or an evil spell, or to shelter them from the gnâma.

776 782 Although these gnéna have no official priest, they nevertheless receive many gifts, and there is no circumcised man who does not feel obliged to make them his small offering, at one time or another. At crossings of paths one throws them preferably flour mixed with water, cowrie shells, milk, hatching eggs, ashes of herbs and plants, gruel, kola nuts, and sorghum cakes. At children's festivals the fodder is thrown to them in greater abundance; the cakes pile up at the entrance of the village (to the great joy of dogs and hens), and the ground is moistened with a light dew of blood (3). On the second day of the

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3. All these offerings are made by the order of a sorcerer and are called saraka. See what I have said about the saraka in Chapter IV, Section I, "Belief in God."

drinking bout, which corresponds to the festival of the كبش (sheep), the soli girls, who are shortly to be excised, throw them the remains of the basi k'li in great handfuls without counting. Basi k'li is the name given to the repast provided for the whole village on this

776 day by the soli (those who are to be excised). It is a kind of semolina
782 (very fine couscous called basi) which is eaten with an /88/ extremely
304 spicy sauce of smoked fish. It is called basi k'li because, in order to
262 provide this repast, the little girls are obliged to run from door to door, clapping their hands, singing and begging (k'li).

776 Among the invisible wanderers, there is one which is strongly reminiscent of our "werewolf." It is the souroukou, an imaginary
825 hyena, whose supposed existence has brought about a strange practice.
514 Every evening one sees groups of little boys and groups of little girls, turning aside a little into the bush: they all go in a band to take their last precautions and attend to the wants of nature -- union is strength even against the gnéna.

776 Many other gnéna are among this group that roams the village; they flutter in the b'lon or entrance huts, they live in horrible filth, hung over doors, on the walls, and on the posts that support the terrace roofs, and the only hangings to be seen anywhere are eggshells, heads of millet, fruit pits, and seeds from the bush, which are offered to these friends as saraka. Nor are private huts without them, for the gnéna roll in the ashes of the hearth, snore on the mats, and take the air in the conari (1); there are some everywhere.

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1. The conari is a baked earth receptacle used for water, beer, and cooking food.

Finally, there are gnéna or djiné who are powerful. Without mercy for their enemies, whom they abandon to all kinds of sorcery and evil spells, they are full of both attention and consideration for their friends. They can cause sickness, poverty, and other calamities to descend on a family, a village, or a whole region; but they can also side with them against a visible or invisible enemy; they can protect them, exorcise anything, and grant real blessings to each and all. The characteristic trait of the gnéna, in fact, is not that they can refrain from doing harm, but that they can also do good directly by performing a good act. Some choose to live in a rock, others prefer a knoll or a large tree near the village, and there are those who

776 do not disdain to frolic in the bottom of a well or pond and keep cool there. These last are put in charge of the elements in a very special way. Although endowed /89/ with a divine virtue, they are still far from gods and are only intermediaries between human beings and the Divinity. This last idea seems to be in the background, almost disappearing, and yet, if one has the patience to listen to the old men and let them express themselves, one quickly sees that they still have it, even though ill defined and very confused, and one can believe that in the beginning the worship of the gnéna was a direct worship, offered to the Divinity through their mediation. Men, women, children, everybody takes part in the worship of the gnéna; although there is one, koté (kouéré in Bani), whose mysteries are veiled, its sect is only semioccult, and the entire population takes part in the festivals held in its honor. Barring a formal order from the sorcerer or the 776 822 impossibility of obtaining items in the liturgical (1) color, everything

1. The reason for a failure to conform to the liturgy is always announced before a saraka or a sacrifice.

used in this worship -- victims, kola nuts -- is white, and among the Negroes white is the symbol of innocence and purity.

776 "Primitive peoples admit the existence of superhuman powers," • 782 says Nicolay. "When these are supposed to inhabit certain objects in the form of spirits, genii, etc., that is animism." /*/ This

/* Fernand Nicolay, Curiosite's des lois et coutumes - Histoire des croyances, superstitions, moeurs, usages et coutumes (selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Ways, Practices, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue). Vol. I, prop. 13. Paris: V. Retaux, 1901./

776 definition fits closely with what we have said about the gnéna, and the
782 worship of these genii is indeed animism and not idolatry. And since, according to Burton, fetishism is less adoration than a propitiation of animate or inanimate objects to which a mysterious power is attributed, the sacrifices and saraka offered by the Bambara to their genii are acts of propitiation rather than of worship.

776 To give the reader a more precise notion of the worship of the gnéna -- and they are legion -- I will divide the powerful ones, those of the third group, into eight categories: the genii of ponds, springs, and wells; the genii of the crops; those who protect children; and those who protect circumcised youths; the genii of the women, that of twins; the dasiri, protector of villages; and the koté or kouéré, a special genie of a semioccult sect. All these genii have their priests, their sacrifices, and their saraka, but since all are not equal in strength and power, the extensiveness and formality of worship is not the same with respect to all. /90/

4. Genie of Ponds, Springs, and Wells

776 There are genii splashing around in all ponds, springs, and wells,
782 and our Negroes think that in order to obtain their good graces they
823 are obliged from time to time to offer them a trickle of /millet/ flour and water, the blood of a white hen, or a mouthful of chewed kola nut. On the edge of a well, at the mouth of a spring, on the edge of a pond, and finally on the banks of a river, offerings, sacrifices, and saraka are made, and their purpose is to prevent our Kneippist genii from escaping. If they leave displeased they take with them the water without which people cannot live, and the spring dries. There is total drought, a terrible misfortune -- for what can become of them without water!

The sacrificer to the water genii is quite often the head of the family on whose land the spring is located. Usually this honor goes by right to the head of the quarter; there are even villages where the sacrificer is none other than the religious head of the village, the gnéna-n-sonnoba /sic/, who is priest of the dasiri, the genie protector of the village.

776 Most frequently these genii are given saraka, but a hen is sacri-
782 ficed each time the wells are cleaned: it is in good taste to do so,
823 and few villages depart from the rule. Once a year a public sacrifice is offered to them, with a degree of formality that varies according to whether the sacrificer is merely the head of a family, the head of a quarter, or the head of the village. Since the women spend a good half of their lives around the wells, they are almost everywhere the ones who provide the materials for the sacrifice.

5. Genii of the Crops

776 When planting time comes, the Bambara, who are farmers above
241 all, blossom out with sacrifices and redden just about everything with
782 blood. The head of the family does not forget the genie of the seed. He offers it a saraka at home and sometimes a sacrifice, and unless he is very old and helpless he appears at the field on the day when the first pinch of seed is consigned to the earth. Before /91/ the /sowing/ is begun a hen's blood must be offered to the genie of fertility, which is responsible for watching over the seed and causing it to sprout and grow, and it is he that makes this offering, unless he has delegated this duty to his eldest son or his brother (the one next after him in seniority).

The departure for the field at planting time has its own unique characteristics. A child (if there is one in the family, obviously) is given the gourd (1) containing the seed, and in the name of the genie

1. A pumpkin cut in two, emptied and dried in the sun.

the father gives him orders and admonitions. On the way out of the hut the child pays his respects to the shades of his ancestors by placing the gourd on the threshold, and leaves quickly, proud as Artaban. He must be careful not to stop on the way unless he has to, and, above all, he must keep silent so that the spirits that fly here, there, and everywhere remain ignorant of what he is carrying and cannot attack the seeds in the millet grain. Anyone who talks runs a grave

776 risk of spoiling the crop -- o be gno soun tigné ("it destroys the vitality
241 of the seed of the millet grain").
782 These genii do not have special festivals in the course of the year. Their priests, the heads of families, offer them saraka and sacrifices at planting time, and some of them sacrifice a hen in the corner of the field while the crop is sprouting and growing, but that is all.

6. Genii Protectors of Children

89 It is not until circumcision that Bambara children take part in
794 the mysteries of pagan worship, but they are early prepared for it so
776 that they may be introduced to the law of secrecy which they must strictly adhere to later when they are initiates of an occult sect. At about the age of seven or eight years, they become affiliated with an association worshipping the genii responsible for protecting them. All these sects are alike, differing only in name. On the banks of the
[85] Bani and the Niger, the object of worship is the tauri (toad or frog), and the croaking of this animal is imitated in their festivals; some villages have the djara (lion) and imitate its roar by whirling their
[534] slingshots, small boards four fingers wide and one to two centimeters long, attached to the end of a string. The most widespread /children's
[84] genie/ is n'tomo, which undoubtedly gets its name from the tree in which it lives (the /92/ jujube tree, n'tomo). It makes children hale and hearty, preserves them from sickness, defends them against the invisible little creatures of the bush, against spells and sorcery, and makes them strong, steadfast, and impervious to suffering.

The confraternity of the n'tomo is modeled after that of the boli. (This is true of both kinds -- for there are two; a white costume is worn to the dance for n'tomo djé and a black costume for n'tomo fign). In order to be admitted one must offer a hen to the child who is head of the n'tomo (the n'tomotigi), prostrate oneself before the tree of the genie, and swear to keep the secret and never to speak of the n'tomo to the uninitiated, especially not to little girls.

796 825 782 A great sacrifice to the spirit protector of the village, the dasiri, is made every year. The spirit always has a mount such as a snake, a rat, a lizard, a donkey, etc.; almost everywhere the mount is a terrible billy goat that roams through the village, enters everywhere, eats everything, and breaks everything without paying attention to the switch. For at least three days at the time of the sacrifice, the village makes merry; men, women, and children dance, stuff themselves with food, and drink and get drunk.

796 782 Just as everyone takes part in the feasting and drinking, so all participate in the sacrifice, even the women, who at least go to the edge of the sacred grove, though they do not enter. And /101/ there is an abundance of everything: dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, d'lo, or millet beer, and finally meats. At least a goat, and sometimes a bull, is killed for the whole village, and the heads of families offer goats and hens, depending their wealth.

782 718 776 In addition to the sacrifices offered once a year and those offered by a family when one of the children marries, the fetish receives homage and tribute from just about everyone. Sterile women and those who habitually miscarry offer it many hens and fawn upon the animal that is its mount. If one gives birth to a baby, one consecrates it to the fetish, calling it dji-ri-ba ("great tree"), gnéna ma ké (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"; ké, "male"), or gnéna ma (gnéna, "genie"; ma, "man"). They even like to add the name of the village where the bountiful dasiri is found: Kolotomo gnéna ma (1), /102/

1. Kolotomo, the name of a village about 30 kilometers from Ségou; gnena, "genie"; ma, "man."

(man or daughter of the dasiri genie of Kolotomo). Actually, the name gnénama is given only to girls; for boys the word ké ("male") is added: gnénama-ké.

776 778 824 It is known through the mediation of sorcerers that a dasiri sometimes leaves its sacred grove and its tree. This event is unusual; the tree may fall from old age, but the sacrifices will be continued

Chapter 6

Worship, Celebrations, Saraka, Sacrifices, and Dances in Honor of the Gnéna

1. The First Two Groups of Gnéna

781 The fundamental bases of all Bambara devotions are first, and
776 above all, fear and secondly, the desire to have everything without effort or work. The Bambara respect a strong, powerful being because it can punish and reward, and since their fetishes are not equal in power, they take care not to honor all equally.

776 The genii of the first two groups have no priest or official
782 minister, and public, solemn sacrifices are offered them very rarely.
852 In the dry season, however, some festivals are held in their honor. The chief participants are children, who on these days stuff themselves with /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, and with sorghum cakes. When they are full they take the leftovers outside the village to a place where paths cross, and many hens, dogs, and other
[735] animals come for the booty. The poor and unfortunate also come, for they, too, may take their share; every saraka (1) belongs to them.

1. Tax, tribute, alms.

776 Little girls and boys take part in these festivals, but there is a
852 special one for unexcised girls, and those who are soon to be excised and are getting ready for this great event in Bambara life bear /106/ all the expenses. It is the celebration of soli basi k'li (1), of which I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

1. Soli, "young firls who will soon be excised"; basi, a kind of couscous with very small grains which distantly resembles semolina; k'li, "obtained by singing and clapping hands."

000 I will speak at greater length in my chapter on circumcision.

776 Although the individual worship of the lesser genii by one per-
782 son or family is seldom public -- except sometimes temporarily, it nonetheless involves an enormous waste of /millet/ flour, kola nuts, cotton, cowrie shells, etc. Nevertheless, there are very few sacrifices in these offerings; most frequently, if not always, they are saraka, or alms, and a kind of tax or tribute since they are obligatory.

782 They are, in fact, obligatory alms, paid by an individual, a
791 family, or a whole quarter of a village, upon the command of a sorcerer. Some sorcerers who have renown or want to acquire it manage to prescribe these taxes for an entire village and, sometimes, even for a whole region. The occurence is not unusual; I have seen it happen every year. A shrewd operator from Bélé Koun in the circle of Sikasso, crosses the Bani in every dry season, and there is not a village in the circle of Ségou but feels called upon to hand hens and cowrie shells over to him and, in addition, afterwards to take a large contribution to one of the nearby crossroads. In spite of his youth -- [787] he is twenty-five or thirty at most -- he is said to learn everything by searching hens' entrails and crushing their viscera between his fingers. He makes profit by predicting terrible calamities everywhere. All his knowledge is summed up in the following words: "The genii are displeased, offer a saraka and offer it quickly, for if you do not, all children under three years old will die... goats, cows, horses, and sheep will die... springs will dry up... the karité butter will fail..., etc." In one place the words are those of a hyena, in another, those of a cow, and farther away it is a wild pig that speaks. And the dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water) is spread and the blood of hens flows in streams. In short, the people are always expected to give to the fetishes and the sorcerers, and to give everything. Some occasionally balk and do not want to obey. The orders of the sorcerer become urgent, his prophesies more terrible than ever; at the end of his patience, he may spit out insults and /107/ curses, and then everyone comes to offer the saraka. Even Moslems let themselves be taken in.

782 In Bambara eyes, the saraka never has the character of a sacrifice. As I explained at length in speaking of the worship of God, it is always

782 alms, an obligatory gift, and consequently a tribute or tax paid to the genii in order to consecrate to them an object, an animal, a person for the purpose of protecting oneself, of avoiding the risk of any disfavor or of receiving a blessing. That is its nature whether it is individual or village-wide, regardless of whether it does or does not involve bloodshed. The Bambara call this kind of offering saraka bo, saraka di (1).

1. Bo, "go out"; di, "give."

782 754 Saraka are also offered to consecrate an object, an animal, or a person to the genii for the purpose of harming a neighbor. There is always a little magic involved in these offerings, and it is not unusual, at a short distance from the corner of land fromed by paths that join or cross, to find on the path a wad of hair, a bit of a horn, a box full of ashes, etc.

The Bambara performs this magic to help the fulfillment of his saraka, his entreaty; he is convinced that if his enemy touches the magic object thus thrown out at random, his vengeance will be more certain, prompt, and drastic. There is more to this symbolic magic: how many times have I seen, at these corners of land where the gnâma (2) stay and the saraka are held, a chicken heart fastened to the

2. Fluids, conscious forces which cause death and sickness. See my chapter on the gnâma.

ground by a bamboo spike! Often someone will crucify a little animal, usually a lizard, on the ground, and a nail will be driven into the part where he wants his enemy to be stricken. For this kind of saraka the Bambara have a standard term, saraka da ma kan (3), ("to make a

3. Saraka, "obligatory alms," "tribute," "tax"; da, "to place," "to put"; ma-kan, "on a man."

saraka against someone").

782 857 There are many kinds of saraka, and they are offered for just about all purposes. Besides those given by order of sorcerers, there are some established by custom itself, and uncircumcised children are required to carry them out. They often hunt turtles, /108/ palm rats, guinea fowl, and partridges, so they plant a strong dry branch either outside the village or even inside it, and on its branches hang the heads of captured animals and the shells of eggs they have sucked. This is their way of thanking the genii, of ensuring other successful hunts, and of protecting themselves from the gnâma of their many victims.

782 The Bambara also give the name of saraka to some practices that are purely and simply superstitious and do not, strictly speaking, have the character of religious worship. In these instances the word saraka must be given a broader meaning than that which I have attributed to it. The old shoes, caps, fruit rinds, rags, etc., hung here and there on branches of trees are not so much a rendering of homage by the Black to a genie, to an external agent, as they are a tribute paid their own inner, personal, and unreasoned fear. In this respect they are like some Europeans, foster brothers of these idiots, who believe in the salt cellar, crossed knives, thirteen at the table, Friday, etc., who turn over the salad bowl before undertaking a serious matter, or slide a four-leaf clover into their vest pockets. And why? It brings good luck, causes success. And how? They cannot tell you, for with them it is not reasoned -- nor is it with the Bambara.

2. Gnéna of the Third Group; The Eight /sic/ Categories of Powerful Gnéna

776 782 796 The third group of genii have their priests and ministers; saraka are not enough for them, and they receive sacrifices. The public sacrifices are annual, and the whole population -- men, women, and children -- participate. Dégé (/millet/ flour mixed with water), white hens, and white kola nuts are the usual material of the sacrifice, and the formula recited can always be reduced to the following: "Give us water; cause peace to reign among us, in the

776 village and in our families; grant us plenty and wealth, give us many
782 wives, healthy and vigorous children, and a long and hearty old age."
796 If the occasion is semipublic /109/ or public, a general sacrifice is always offered in the name of the family, the quarter, or the village, and then individual sacrifices follow. On the days when they are held, there are always dances and drinking bouts, for the favors of a fetish cannot be obtained except by leaping to the sound of drums and by getting drunk.

At the risk of repeating myself, I cannot resist giving the fascinating side of the Negroes' attachment to their fetishism and describing the festivals and celebrations in honor of the principal fetishes -- in order that the reader may gain a greater understanding and feeling for their worship.

The N'tomo, the Special Children's Fetish

852 The harvest is over, and the yield of the field cultivated by the
796 children during the winter, together with the small donations received from the people of the village, allows the n'tomigi (head of the confraternity) and his siéré (aide, deputy) to furnish its initiates and the old men -- the latter are never forgotten -- with a plentiful feast of kola nuts, millet beer, or d'lo, and /millet/ flour mixed with honey water and milk, or dégé. The day of the celebration is set by the head of the village and by the elders, and everyone prepares for it two weeks in advance. In the blon, or entrance huts, and in the
852 shade of trees, one sees nothing but old men cutting and sewing dloki,
796 bougi, bogo, and yaba (1), which will be worn for the first time on
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1. Dloki, a large blouse. Bougi, near Ségou, a kind of pants without legs; in Bani country, a strip of cloth three to four fingers wide which goes around the waist, passes between the thighs, and drops in back, forming flaps over the heavy part of the thighs.

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The end of this strip is tucked up.
Bogo, garment worn by girls until their marriage, consisting of a strip of cloth tied at the waist and falling in back to make a train.
Yaba, boys' jacket, especially common in Bani country.

that day. A swarm of children patch the yellow or white blouses that will be worn during the dance, and grease and re-grease the mask of the n'tomo. They pay special attention to the horns, which are often hidden under little thongs of red leather decorated from end to end with well-polished cowrie shells as white as snow.

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But now we come to the longed-for day! All the little rebels go single file to the fetish tree, and each carries the hen, its feet tied, which he intends for the sacrifice. They /110/ all take off their blouses -- the little undergarment allows freer movement and is less hampering -- and, after some whispering they finally end up squatting, fixing their big, black eyes on the leader, the n'tomotigi, who begins the sacrifice with the assistance of his aide, the siéré.

This little fellow is really funny, as with the solemnity of an old man he pours the dégé, sprinkles the blood of the hens, and noisily spits the remains of a piece of chewed kola nut onto the sacred tree, the dwelling of his genie. I do not doubt that he is convinced, and thoroughly convinced, that he is not addressing a tree trunk that has no consciousness; he believes that he is in the presence of who watches him, waits for him, and asks only to grant his wishes. Since he is addressing a powerful being, fear and emotion at first make him tremble; but gradually his voice grows firmer, and very clearly he pronounces his formula: "N'tomo ye, see this hen, a beautiful hen, isn't it? It is fat! n'tomo, on behalf of all of us I offer you this hen as a sacrifice. Favor us, defend us against the fury of the genii of the bush and against the malicious. Make us strong and vigorous, give us plenty to eat and drink, drive sickness from us. Give us water and a good harvest, n'tomo, and give wealth to our families."

852 796 782 After this special sacrifice come the individual sacrifices, and the very young boys who are henceforth to belong to the n'tomo prostrate themselves before the fetish tree and take an oath to reveal nothing to the uninitiated, and especially not to little girls. This oath is not at all trivial: "If you talk, if you reveal your oath, " says the leader showing each one some black powder, "you will die." And they all reply without trembling: "May I die!"

852 796 When the rite of admission is over, each initiate plucks his hen and draws it, and while the victims simmer over the fire in an earthen conari, the youngsters beat drums and abandon themselves to the dance, and so into a frenzy which continues under the eye of the fetish, in the shade of its preferred tree until the time of the feast. Each child in turn dances the dance of the fetish, which consists of leaps and capers and a graceful twirling of a flexible switch. To dance he dons [292] the white or yellow blouse of the fetish (n'tomo ka dloki, "the blouse of the n'tomo"), which is white (dje) or black, yellow (fign, as I said in the preceding chapter) /sic/ /111/, and takes the horned mask, the n'tomo kongolo ("head of the n'tomo") by means of which he externalizes in a concrete form his concept of the genie.

Victims abound, and the feast is plentiful. There is enough for everybody, and there is not one on that day who does not lick his fingers and say with a smile: "Ne ne fara de! (1), How full I am!"

1. Né, "me, " "I"; fara, "am full"; dé, "surely."

The little boys' families contribute much, for Bambara mothers and little sisters have good hearts. Thanks to them, every initiate can offer from 10 to 20 liters of dégé, the same amount of d'lo; and his gourd of to (gruel) holds enough to tire six to eight big eaters. In addition to the dessert, which is kola nut, each boy receives a new garment for himself and a light bogo and sometimes a tafé (2) for

[291] 2. Tafé, rectangular piece of cloth which the women wear around their hips.

852 794 Every time one of the three principal members of the staff, wants to dance, respects are paid to them or to their leader, and all day and all night nothing is heard but frightful "you you" and atrocious cries. There is a protocol for everyone to follow, and before each to-n-dé begins to prance in front of the drums, he goes and bows to his leader to show his devotion and respect for him. He holds himself like a spring, brandishes the gun, ax, or stick that he will use in the dance, and in one jump strikes his feet together under the nose of the one to whom he is paying his respects. The women are quieter and show their respect by a genuflection before the master.

In addition to his staff the master of a n'golo, the to-n-tigi, has pages, a standard bearer, trumpeters, and soldiers, and to vary the program he goes here and there with his frenzied band to greet an elder and give him a serenade. In some villages custom decrees that the youths put on the best they have in the way of clothing; in others, on the contrary, they must get themselves up in horrible, dirty rags so that, on seeing them thus clad, one asks where they could have dug up all these horrors. They must amuse themselves and be [533] amused, laugh and cause laughter, and this last aim is always accomplished as they have such priceless mimics. /114/

The Mouso ka djiri, the Women's Special

776 796 831 It is impossible to know all the genii responsible for watching over women, for they are legion. Every month, at the new moon, the women organize a dance in their honor, and every year they make a public, solemn sacrifice to them. The most widespread is the mouso ka djiri, and its worship flourishes especially in Bani country.

When its festival comes, all the excised women offer it a little /millet/ flour mixed with water, a hen, and two kola nuts, and the head of the village, or, in his absence, an elder, goes and reddens the bark of the fetish tree (1). There is no need for me to go into

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1. Some people assert that they have seen women sacrificing. I have seen women perform saraka involving bloodshed, but never a sacrifice.

776 this sacrifice at length, for in the preceding chapter I stated the
796 function of the fetish; it may be imagined that the ladies and maidens
831 ask for whatever makes a woman strong and beautiful. Moreover, the indecent dances to which they abandon themselves under the sacred tree sufficiently reveal their inner thoughts. They have only one -- to show their breasts to the fetish and scratch their navels on its bark; in some villages custom demands this, and it is required of all. Young girls do it to develop their breasts, married women to become fertile, and all of them to be protected from the unpleasant accidents peculiar to their sex.

796 There is no festival without a feast and none without drinking, and the women offer the whole village sorghum gruel and beer for a drinking bout. They also offer kola nuts to all the elders and heads of families, and they know better than to withhold this treat from fathers, husbands, grown sons, older brothers, and those they love.

The Sinsin, the Special Twin's Fetish

782 The sacrifice to a sinsin is made on the umbilical cord which
845 is hung in the center of plates of woven grass that constitute the
778 fetish. Each plate belongs to one of the twins and even bears his
852 name. The sacrifices in honor of this fetish are always double; for each child separately, the family offers /millet/ flour /115/ mixed with water, millet beer, a kola nut, and a hen.

845 This is strictly a family fetish; the father of the family is its
778 priest, and only the children and their parents are present at the
852 sacrifices. Everything is done in a quiet and happy intimacy, and although there may be a few drunkards here and there, there is never an orgy. Sacrifices to a sinsin are made very frequently to bring its blessing to the mother and children; they are also performed on all occasions of the slightest importance in the lives of the twins: when their hair is cut eight days after birth, at the tattooing festival, at circumcision, at marriage, etc. Once a year a more formal sacrifice is made; the women cook d'lo, the millet beer, and the

793 The gnéna-n-sonnaba, the dougoutigi, assumes office from the
782 first day and offers a sacrifice in the name of his people. On the trunk
62 of the tree, about a meter from the ground, he pours d'lo, or millet
718 beer, and dégé, or /millet/ flour mixed with water, and causes a flow of blood from hens, roosters, goats, and sometimes from a young bull. After this general sacrifice, individual ones follow, for, in order to /118/ place himself under the protection of the genie, each family head in order of seniority offers it a little dégé and a little blood, through the intermediary of his leader, the priest. And on the trunk of the tree there is nothing but great blood stains with feathers, hairs, and shreds of skin stuck in their midst with the remains of chewed kola nuts. Then come the dances, and men, women, and children go into a frenzy at the sound of drums; and the tumult is indescribable.

Sacrifices offered to the dasiri

718 A path a meter wide leads from the village to the fetish tree
782 which is always located in the middle of a small grove if possible.
796 Heads of families sacrifice to it several times a year -- on the morning after the konio, or first night of marriage, for example, but the festival in which the whole village takes part is annual. The ceremony has greater importance every second year, and every seventh year it degenerates into an orgy.

During the sacrifice the women stay at the edge of the sacred grove, and only the men and boys go inside and surround the fetish. After an offering of dégé and a little d'lo, the throat of a sheep or goat is cut in the name of the whole village, and the head of each family, comes with hens, sheep, goats, etc., according to the family's means and the number of members; the meat piles up. The hens are plucked on the spot, the large pieces are cut up, and the women carry it all back to the village. Each family head is given a piece as big as a fist from the first sacrifice offered in the name of all, and this, too, is
[253] taken back to the village; the rest is roasted and then grilled on the spot and eaten by the men, without salt, pepper, or any kind of seasoning. The dégé and d'lo of the main sacrifice are drunk under

778 the fetish tree, the former by the children who smear themselves
782 and whiten their entire faces, and the latter by the men and circum-
796 cised youths (1).

1. By the main sacrifice I mean the sacrifice made in the name of the whole village.

After the noon meal men, women, and children go to the public square to drink beer, or d'lo, and to dance. /119/ The signal for the celebration is given by the gnéna-n-sonnaba, who makes a little speech inviting his children (né ka démisenou, "my children," "my subjects") to have fun and to drink but to avoid fights and quarrels, and then launches into a quadrille. While he dances, the crowd stands bareheaded, cries "you you" loudly, and competes as to who will shake his spear or ax to beat the measure. This annual festival goes on for three or four days, as long as the d'lo, or millet beer, lasts.

776 All circumcised men and excised women may, through the
782 intermediary of the gnéna-n-sonnaba, offer a sacrifice to the genie protector of the village. Anyone who thinks he has offended or displeased it offers one -- with or without bloodshed according to his means -- to obtain pardon, propitiate it, and gain its favor. Individuals sacrifice primarily to make requests; a di ("give it") are the first words they were able to lisp as infants. A sterile woman
[842] will offer it a kola nut, dégé, a rooster or a hen at every moment, always promising not to be miserly and to give more if she becomes a mother. She will be especially assiduous toward the dasiri animal, the mount of the genie of this name; she will coax it, stuff it with bran, and will often go far into the bush to pick it a stalk of grass or a leafy branch which are its delicacies.

776 Genii spirits can leave the spring, the rock, or the tree where
778 they have established their dwellings, and the dasiri is no exception to this rule. If it does so, the fetish tree loses its sanctity, becomes a common object, and can be destroyed. Similarly, all things in the sacred grove, both plant and animal, cease to be taboo and can be used for their customary purposes. The dasiri is not at all fickle.

776 It rarely leaves its tree; it likes its little grove and shady park, and
778 in many places it is satisfied with a stump that is all blackened, worm eaten, rotten, and falling to pieces.

The formula of the sacrifice

782 When one is present at a sacrifice to the dasiri and sees the
781 gnéna-n-sonnaba uncover his head, take off his large blouse, and crouch at the feet of the fetish, one expects something imposing and grand. Nothing of the sort occurs, and one is quite surprised to find so little gravity /120/ in such an important act. People enjoy themselves and chat; the priest, red with blood, tosses off witticisms and coarse jokes, and while feet and wings of the victims -- goats, sheep, and hens -- twitch in the agonies of death, nothing passes from one group to another but bursts of laughter that finally disappear far off at the edge of the grove where the women are.

782 The words in the sacrificial formula vary a little from one village to another, all depending on the volubility of the sacrificer. Nevertheless, it remains basically the same everywhere. After having greeted the fetish in his own name and the name of his subjects, he implores it to forgive them all the insults, offenses, and disrespect toward it, of which they have been guilty, voluntarily or involuntarily, during the entire year. He then calls it by a name related to the type of tree in which it is located -- e.g., ma ziraba ("great baobab man"), ma djala ba ("great false-cedar man"), -- and announces that he is going to sacrifice. While offering the dégé and d'lo, he implores it to protect them against the evils of the sons of the fetish siri, the souba (1), to preserve them from the souya maou (2), the

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1. Sou, "night"; ba, "great." The souba are masters of the night who change themselves into hyenas or owls, dig up corpses, and eat human flesh.

2. Souyaké, "to prowl at night."

782 gné-foula (3), and from the wokolo, a little dwarf genie. He then

3. "Two eyes," i.e., people with second sight.

asks for strength and health for all, for children who will be healthy, strong, and vigorous, and for wives. "Preserve us," he adds in closing, "from wicked people, discord, quarrels, and fights, from the rage of women who easily fall under the power of 'satan,' and from sickness; finally, give us rain, without which a harvest is not possible." Then he cuts the throat of a goat or a white sheep, and while he reddens the bark of the sacred tree with blood, he repeats his pleas and requests, and he says them again a third time while offering the kola nut.

At individual sacrifices nothing in the formula is changed. However, if the person on whose behalf the sacrifice is offered wants a special blessing or favor, he tells the sacrificer about it, and the latter states the request then and there. /121/

When the head of a family cannot be present at a sacrifice, his substitute gives the reason for his absence. Two witnesses then come to testify that the reason given is the true one and that there is no ill will whatever on the part of the absentee.

Sometimes a great clamor arises during the sacrifice, and one would say that people were fighting under the sacred tree, or at least arguing.

782 787 Nothing of the sort is happening; the crowd is crying out against the fetish and interceding for an unfortunate whose sacrifice has not been accepted. It is known that this has happened when the hen does not fall on its back or its side with its feet in the air. The kola nut gives the genie's answer much more definitely. The sacrificer cuts it in two, holds the two pieces together between thumb and fore-finger, and having touched the ground with them twice saying, "Tell us if you accept the sacrifice," he throws them at the foot of the sacred tree. If the two pieces fall with the pulp on top, no further doubt is possible; the sacrifice is accepted, and he repeats the same procedure again, saying, "Since you accept the sacrifice, tell us if

you accept it at my hands." If one of the pieces falls with the pulp on top and the other onto the pulp, there is an affirmative answer from the dasiri. The sacrificer bites the kola nut, cuts out with his teeth the piece that contains the seed, and, when he has chewed it a moment, spits the remains onto the bark of the fetish tree.

This procedure, wholly dependent on chance, is often long, for the pieces of kola nut do not always fall in the desired position at the first try. After three failures the crowd ceases to restrain itself and, with gestures and voice, each person intercedes for the unfortunate one. The cries do not stop until the kola nut gives the answer, "I accept and am no longer angry!"

The Semioccult Society of the Koré, or Koté

The Bambara are, above all, farmers, and cultivating a field has such great importance in their eyes that for them it alone really deserves the name of work. One who does not handle the pick may be active and skillful, but he is not a worker and one does not say of him: "A bi ajaké, he is working." But will the seed that /122/ they consign to the earth in the winter sprout, grow, become large, and ripen? However little one knows the Bambara, one can imagine and understand their fears, for they are surrounded by a band of malicious spirits ever ready to pounce on them. Therefore they heed protectors and helpers, and at planting time they offer something to all, even to the rain. The main fetish to which they appeal is the koté, or koré, which lives in a tree in the middle of a small grove.

In order to be present at the sacrifices to the koté, it is necessary to be initiated and to know the password. This initiation, may take place by day, but at least in Bani country, it usually takes place at nightfall when the setting sun takes on a bloody hue. The sons of the genie go in procession to the sacred grove. The koretigi, the priest, opens the march, preceded by musicians who beat the denouba (1) and the kingé (2). With him are the kâra ma ("man of

794 korédé ("sons of koré"), and in all the province of Ségou, wherever
796 a sacrifice is offered to the fetish, they may go into the sacred grove without any fear and take part in the mysteries. They have the password -- "djanté ma, man of djanté," and will know how to answer when interrogated by the souroukou (group of the hyena).

794 After the initiation the koretigi (priest of koré) proceeds with
796 sacrifices. Everything happens as at the dasiri: after the libations of /millet/ flour (dégé) and beer (d'lo), the trunk of the sacred tree is
●782 reddened with blood, and all around the blood are tufts of fur and feathers stuck to the bark by remainders of chewed kola nut. A hyena mask called koré koungolo ("head /tête/ of koré") is also reddened with blood, as is the kârâ, the emblem of the genie which is used as an altar for deceased initiates. Part of the meat is taken to the village, and the rest is grilled on the spot and eaten without any seasoning whatever.

In the sacrifices, koré and those that form its court are asked to watch over the harvest so that it may be abundant, to watch over the flocks so that they may thrive, to provide the petitioners with their fill of food and drink all their lives, and to give them a vigorous old age, etc., and all this is requested for one sole purpose: "so that we may be able to enjoy a woman and devote ourselves to carnal pleasures."

794 After the repast the crowd abandons itself to the dance, and un-
796 til morning there is an indescribable uproar and endless shouting. At daybreak they go to the public square, and as long as the beer (d'lo) lasts /125/ the orchestra makes bedlam in front of the drinkers who squat around full gourds, and the women sit on mats or tiny stools piled on top of each other, clap their hands, and answer the obscenities of the korodouga with further obscenities.

[535] The dance of the groups, in which all members, young and old, take part, consists of more or less comical contortions which they execute going around in a circle, one behind the other. The old men tire quickly and their throats soon get dry, so they are not slow to sit down and get drunk to please koré, and the young people then abandon themselves and dance to their hearts' content.

794 Two or three tatougoula, a flaming torch in each hand, open
796 the dance. They scorch their backs, chests, and armpits, and
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794 thousands of sparks rain onto their heads and bare bodies, and smoke
796 and sizzle on their skins before going out. The korodouga, armed with
785 leafy branches, chase the sparks. They devote themselves chiefly to their obscene songs; their minds on the perforated gourds which they shake furiously, and more than one dancer feels himself getting roasted. And when the torches are almost burned out the tatougoula squat before the big drum and for the last time shake the handful of
[522] burning straw that they have left. An obscene gesture provokes a stifled laugh here and there, a "hou hou" from the souroukou, a roar from the djara, a chuckle from the soula, and cries of encouragement from around the gourds: "O do, that's it!"

While the djara /lions/ or sogo /beasts/, /wearing/ huge masks roar around the groups of drinkers, the ng'oni sama or wara tear their chests and their armpits with brushes of thorns, and the soula, grimacing and weeping, throw the group of women into confusion and put the children to flight. As to the bisatjila, they circle like lions in a cage, uttering wild animal cries and trying to excite themselves. Suddenly, as if seized by fury, they brandish their long, flexible whips. These whirl for a moment above their heads, whistle in the air, and then slap the flesh. The men strike hard; each blow leaves its mark or furrow, and /126/ blood often flows. They pale and tremble in all their limbs under the pain, but in spite of everything they strike and strike, for the instrument of torture must be worn to shreds and fly to pieces. At every blow of the whip the korodouga band throw themselves onto the victim and massage and rub him, and the souroukou lose themselves in indecent behavior in front of the great drum.

794 In addition to the sacrifice offered every seven years, there are
796 annual sacrifices to the koré, to the shades of its priests, the korétigi,
and finally to the shades of its initiates, the koréde. There is always
782 a sacrifice at the death of an initiate; the groups dance the sacred
764 dance, and for three nights there is the shouting and the indescribable bedlam in the koré tou ("grove of the koré") of which I have told.

794 If the deceased initiate was an old man, a graybeard, he has
764 completed his whole career and his fellow-members come in great numbers to pay him their respects. Before the corpse, which is laid out under the trees which shade the entrance of the village, they

776 inanimate object, and whether the form it takes is human or animal, whether it resembles an eggplant, a potato, or a napkin ring, that form remains a boli as long /128/ as there is a piece left that is visible to the naked eye, and the boli never leaves it. In the case of the boli, there is such a close union between the object and the spirit that this combination becomes one and the same individual; it is the union of soul and body in order to make up a person or individual.

776 782 In sacrifices to the gnéna, the reverence of the Negro is not directed to the spring, the tree, the plant, etc., but to the genie that inhabits it. But in sacrifices to the gnâ, reverence is directed simultaneously to the spirit and to its object; one does not exist, is not thought of, without the other. Negroes have often given me to understand this, and one of my old friends, in order to explain his worship, expressed himself in these words: "When you honor your friend, is it his body or his soul that you honor? It is neither his body nor his soul; you honor both at the same time, the person himself as a whole, your friend; that is how it is with the boli." (1) /129/

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1. In Bambara:

"Ne koko, n'i bé i terké bôgna, i be a fari bôgna wa ouala a dousou bôgna. I tè i terké bôgna wa? A bé té boliou fé kɔ̀. An bi Sétané bôgna wa ouala a fen yéré bôgna, héwa, anou dé bi boli bôgna.

"Faran fasili do be dasiri, djiri an'a djiné tjé. N'i b'a djiri son, i dé bé dasiri son, nka, i bé dasiri bôgna doron? Djiri te fen gouansan yé? a ti fouɲ gnâ.

"Tɔ̀, o do.

Translation:

"I myself say: if you honor your friend, do you honor his body or his soul? You honor your friend, don't you? It is the same with the boli. Do we honor satan or do we honor his object? Assuredly, it is the boli.

"There is a difference between the dasiri tree and its genie. If you sacrifice to the tree, you sacrifice to the dasiri, but do you not honor the dasiri alone? Is the tree not a mere object? It gives us nothing.

"Exactly, that's right.

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"O fara n fasili-ln te boli dé ni sétané tjé wa? Nibé boli dé son, i be Sétané son tigné, nka i be sétané bôgna doron, boli dé, héwa fen min yéra o dé te fouî gnâ.

"O té, djiné ni boli ma-n-kan, boli dé hen, an be fen min yé, o be fen gnâ dérén. Sétané an'o fen oloû foula té ké boli yé wa?"

"Does this difference not exist between the boli and satan? If you sacrifice to the boli, you sacrifice to satan, that is certain; but you honor only the demon, and its object is no help to you.

"No, you haven't understood. A genie and a boli are not the same. The boli is bound to what we see; it is useful to us. Satan and his object, both together -- do they not make up the boli?"

Boli dé: An object in which is found the spirit the Negroes call Sétané, "Satan."

776 The gnéna, or djiné, half man and half angel, malicious though it is, can nevertheless do good and grant a direct blessing by performing a good act. But the gnâ, the boli, a fallen angel (méléké sifa do do, " it is a kind of angel"), in revolt against God and, as I stated in my chapter on God, condemned to the tortures of fire, is entirely evil and cannot directly do a good deed (1). It can never-

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1. I challenge the European "Bambara scholars" of Ségou to listen to the two djéli (storytellers /griots/) of Goïn, a small village a short distance from this center. The sacred dances and songs of the boli are their specialty, and they travel over the

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T18 and even going so far as tocause his death." These accounts excited
194 the Negroes' curiosity; they wished to see the boli, wanted to sacrifice to them. They gave themselves to the boli, and thus became their children.

Once the people were initiated, the travelers unveiled the mysteries to them, bound them by the law of secrecy. They imposed upon them the prohibition against admitting uninitiated men and women and children to their ranks, and the sects were formed. These have multiplied continuously; each boli has its own, and since the boli are male and female and produce children, they have become legion, and each village has sects and boli of its own. Although the
T18 worship of the boli has not destroyed that of the gnéna, or djiné, it
194 has long exceeded the latter; their sacrifices and drinking bouts are accompanied by an external pomp that has a different grandeur, and no important action is taken without their agreement. It can be asserted without fear of error that the worship of the gnâ, or boli, is the chief religion of the Bambara at the present time. It is the basis of union within families and the foundation of the sina-n-koun, or sworn friendship; through the boli the people of the same village are closely united, and this union extends from one village to another and from one province to another, since all members of a boli's sect are brothers and owe each other mutual assistance under certain specified circumstances.

In the Bambara's mind (and I have spoken of this at length in
T16 my chapter, "The Ideas of the Bambara are not of Islamic Origin"),
T18 the boli are nothing less than intrinsically evil beings in revolt against
● T82 the Supreme Being, God the Creator and Lord of all things. As the formula of the sacrifice to Touafé Bla suggests, the place where they dwell is fire or hell, and there is not a Negro who will not tell you /134/ that the boli is a demon (sétané). Can it not be said that his religion is a worship rendered to "Satan himself?" He renders this worship in full knowledge of what he is doing. Have I not heard the sacrificer in a sacrifice to a Nama boli (1), shout before cutting the

1. A note by Father Coppe of the White Fathers (unpublished manuscript).

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which I have before me, reports the same fact on the subject of the Komo boli. Moreover, this Father is a student of the Bambara -- when the Blacks of Ségou speak of him, they say, "Bamana-n-do," which means that he spoke and understood their language well.

throat of the victim of the general sacrifice: "Alla djampa ba, i k'an bla, i ka bo an koun na, God, great traitor, leave us, go away from us!" -- and the crowd repeated the blasphemy after him: "Alla djampa ba, i k'anbla, i ka bo an koun na!"

3. Boli Whose Power is Slight

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778 Since the boli do not all have the same strength and power, and fear is the basis and foundation of Bambara worship, they are not all equally honored. We will divide them into two main groups, those of "little power" and those of "great power," and we will end this chapter with a word on the talking boli, the prerogative of certain sorcerers, and on the sirikoun, another, quite special, kind of boli.

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278 By boli of little power I mean all evil fetishes which are basically not very terrifying, in the sense that it is thought that they very seldom cause anyone's death. Many of them are primarily medicines, and almost everyone has them. They are tails of cows, goats, dogs, and wild animals; they have no specific names and are generally called foura (2) ("medicine"). Additional "medicines" are the kana,

2. This name foura is given in a general way to all boli; I should therefore remark that the word "medicine" in the sense that we understand it, is not the exact translation of the word foura. This word is in itself untranslatable

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into our language and means a force,
a conscious force, that opposes
another conscious force which seeks
to harm us, and destroys it.

horns and hoofs of bulls filled with an ointment the composition of which it is very difficult to specify: blood, fat, and dried, crushed glow-worms are combined with iron powder, charcoal, and other /135/ ingredients. They are the Bambara equivalent of the "pink" pills which cure all ills, including baldness and ingrowing nails -- and that sums it up. The kana of which I speak are boli, and differ from the kana possessed by each powerful boli, which are no longer boli but parts of boli. Let us quickly admit that the word kana is as indefinite as the word foura, and means primarily "that which protects, preserves, and keeps us from harm."

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782 These little fetishes are not given festivals, and only their owners sprinkle them with blood and sacrifice to them. They cost little, and a sorcerer or the owner of a father foura or kana will make [45%] one for a modest sum varying between 5 kémés and a ba fla (5 kémés = 200 cowrie shells; ba fla = 1, 600 cowrie shells), which is from 5 sous to 2 francs.

Apart from the sorcerers, whose boli are innumerable, there is a whole group of people, the noumons (blacksmiths), the koulés (who dig canoes and mend broken gourds), the donzo (hunters), etc., who have such strong confidence in all these horrors that they would rather die of hunger than be deprived of them. The hunters all have some to make them active and alert. Before every hunt of the least importance there is a black pullet from each, and on the return another sacrifice is made, however unlucky the hunt may have been. The keeper of each fetish is usually the only one to pay respects to it. However, his brother hunters may give it a small offering, and it is understandable that they do so, since each fetish has its specialty. One is for deer, another for guinea fowl, a third for the big antelope (dadjé in Bambara and best known to Europeans under the name of koba, a word of the Peul language) or for the wild pig /facochère/, for the panther or the

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224 lion, for the hyena or for the anteater, etc., and since each cannot
778 possess them all, one or the other is appealed to according to the
782 need of the moment.

The most interesting of this group of boli are the togo fen foula, which watch over the gun and arms of the hunter in a quite special way, protecting them from the ko nege ba, a greedy and rough hand which deprives a woman of her periods if she touches meat offered to it in sacrifice or game killed under its auspices, and from the tougourouna, which has consideration only for those who own it and makes all others /136/ powerless /the French word here is impuissant, meaning both "powerless" and "impotent"/ if they touch the meat of its sacrifices or game killed under its auspices (1).

1. Game killed under the auspices of a boli belongs to it just like the victims of a sacrifice, and if these are "taboo" for a class of people, the game similarly becomes taboo.

224 Along with the fetish some hunters also own the gnâma daha (2),
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2. Gnâma, "force," "power," "malignant fluid"; daha, earthen receptacle called a conari.

a conari in which roots and leaves gathered at night by moonlight, here and there at random are simmered and soaked. When certain kinds of game, such as an anteater, for example, have been killed, the animal is washed with these roots and this juice of doubtful color. I have been told that the juice of the gnâma daha induces the flow of urine, so that the gnâma (3) of the animal leaves, its wild animal

3. See what I said about the gnâma in Chap. I, p. 17 ff.

smell disappears, and then the meat can be eaten (4). /137/

778 596 782 At the annual sacrifice the gouatigi, or head of the family, offers a goat and at least a hen and a kola nut for each male child no matter how strained his circumstances or how slight his self-respect. He also offers d'lo, or millet beer, and all his family make merry. [574] Some even do things in a big way, and although the whole village does not take part in the drinking bout, all the old men are invited, and many close friends come from everywhere.

778 596 The family boli take the interests of the head of the family in their hands; they are responsible for driving away illness and reverses of fortune. /138/ Through them one gains many descendants, wealth, wives, a happy and lively old age, honor and respect. They are also appealed to on all occasions in life that are of the slightest importance. Before a long journey is undertaken or a business venture is entered into, when a disaster threatens or there is a possibility of a piece of unhoped-for good fortune, they are reddened with a trickle of blood. Sacrifice is also made to them at harvest time (many are even called by the generic name of gno four, "millet medicine"), but especially at circumcisions and excisions, at betrothals, marriages, and funerals. The tne, or "taboo," of these fetishes (see above, p. 5ff.), is taboo for each wife's eldest son, and sometimes the whole family makes it its own.

4. Boli whose Power is Great

778 782 796 I call powerful boli all those gnâ of every shape and size whose worship is secret and in whose mysteries only those participate who have been initiated into the rites, after having sworn on their lives never to reveal them. Countless victims are offered to these boli; some of them are always warm and are ceaselessly reddened with blood. At the annual festivals not only is there a hecatomb of roosters and hens, but dogs and goats by the dozen also die, and in Bani country I have seen as many as five or six sacrificers working at the same time. This is the great and true Bambara worship, and it gives rise to orgies of four to eight days; it eclipses the ancient worship, that

of the gnéna, or djiné, and like it or not, the worship of the dead is trivial in comparison, a little devotion, one might say.

These boli are greatly feared and dreaded. They render justice and decide all controversies; they have the right of life and death over human beings; and it is through their intermediary that the Bambara avenge themselves and take reprisal on a real or imaginary enemy.

No victims are too fine for the powerful boli. There was a time when men were sacrificed to them -- I think that this cannot possibly be doubted. At the time of the Negro king N'golo, says the legend, a man of Faléma -- a small village on the road from Ségou to Koutiala which is now in ruins -- went to the king with his fetish /139/ Sa folo. The king had himself initiated, wanted to own it, and his first victim was the owner himself, the man from Faléma. If old men talk to you about the capture of Sikasso by the French, they will all tell you that, on the morning of the attack, men were sacrificed to the chief boli of the city. Were there not, in 1907, in a temple not far from Koutiala, a row of human skulls hung on the walls as ex voto? A little before the conquest, under the reign of the Moslem princes El-Hadj-Omar and Amadou, the master of the Nama fetish of Misango was asked to go to Ségou with his idol. He said he did not own one, but a woman betrayed him, and a search was made in Misango and its environs. The man was informed in time, and he changed the hiding place of his Nama, and the woman, convicted of lying, was given him as a slave in compensation. A little later, a sacrifice of thanksgiving was offered to the fetish, and the traitorous woman was among the victims. She was old, and the god considered her too tough; he ordered that she be sold and some children be bought, since they were victims worthy of it. Its orders were carried out, "for," say the storytellers who sing it praises, "when sacrifice is made to the Nama one must never forget nzégéné dégé (1), honey, two red

1. Millet flour and nzégéné (Balanites oethiopica).

roosters, two red kola nuts, and one dégenéni, an infant of two to three months."

Since the French occupation and the suppression of slavery, human beings are no longer sacrificed regularly. All the legends give one to understand, moreover, that they were always unusual and very infrequent. Yet who will ever be able to say what took place, and what still takes place nowadays at night in those sacred groves which only initiates can enter? One can always imagine that, lacking sacrifices, the initiates of the siri, the fetish of the souba or soubaga, disinter corpses in order to have human blood to offer to their idol and human flesh to taste. It is a unanimous belief among all the Negroes that they do so, and no sacrifice is made to the gnéna, to the gnâ, or to the shades of ancestors without a repetition of the words: "Protect us from the souba," -- in other words: "Protect us against the initiates of siri." These souba, of which I have already spoken /140/ in my chapter on metamorphosis (see above, p. 29), do not seem to differ in any way from the occult religious sects of the Basêzi of Uganda and the Baswêzi of the Ouchirombo, the cannibals of the equator.

And of what are they made, all these boli that for the most part have their temples and their sacred groves? A little of everything, I think, goes into the making of these horrors. Many times have I untangled these blood-coated gods and found only the bark of trees, roots, horns of goats, deer, and bulls, and finally claws of almost all quadrupeds. It is said that the Komo of Tigini, 30 or 35 kilometers from Ségou, is the body of a child. The legend says it was made by one Kari, the great-great-grandfather of the man who owns it at present, and this miserable man pushed barbarism to the point of taking his first grandson, a few months old, and grinding him alive in a mortar. An almost identical legend is current about the Komo of Kégné in Bani country which is at present in the hands of quite a young man called Marka N'zan. It is even said that if the first child of the owner of this latter fetish is a boy it belongs to the Komo. Is this child sacrificed or do they simply poison him? I have nothing definite on this matter.

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/newly married/ couple by their friends. It varies from 40 cowrie shells to 2 kémés, or 160 cowrie shells.

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425 "a taboli konio kera, the marriage of his boli has taken place."

1435 The value of a gnâ varies between 30 and 40 francs, and whoever owns one can from then on make them. If one counts the presents given to the maker and to his staff, the dogs, goats, and kola nuts offered in sacrifice on the day of his reception, and finally the beer of the wedding, its value is undoubtedly more than 100 francs.

5. Differences among the Powerful Boli

778 I class all the powerful boli into three main groups. In the first I place those which formerly were the prerogative of kings, princes, and ministers; in the second, those which have neither temple nor sacred grove; and in the third, those which have a temple and a sacred grove, or at least one or the other.

Those of the first group are not at all numerous, and the most popular are the Safolo, the Kongoba, the Nan-Woloko, and the Kouantara. They are usually found in villages which were formerly capitals of cantons or provinces and are in the hands of people whose families have included a kafotigi (head of a canton) or a fama (king or petty king), i.e., a head of a province, a minister of the king on whom the title of ruler (fama) was bestowed.

Everything leads me to think that in the beginning these were merely fetishes responsible for watching over the king and the people of his court, analogous to what above I have called the family boli. At present they have become boli of sects. But although all circumcised men can enter the ranks of those who pay them respect, only married men become initiated, and the orgies in their honor are private orgies whose entire cost is borne by graybeards.

778 According to legend, slaves were sacrificed to these boli in the
782 time of the Bambara kings. Since then the worshippers have been content to offer them millet beer, hens, and goats in addition to the

778 kola nuts required in every sacrifice. All the people of the village
782 rejoice at the annual sacrifice. From the goat hut, where hangs the goatskin that serves as its tabernacle (1), the fetish is carried in pro-

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1. The Bambara, whose huts are usually very clean, put their gods away in dark, filthy corners. The temples are small and have such low doors that it is often necessary to lie prone in order to enter.

cession to the place of sacrifice, a large tree that casts a little shade inside the village. During the procession the initiates shout sacred hymns at the tops of their voices, drums and xylophones beat and rumble, and all the circumcised stop when it passes /144/ and reverently bare their heads. The women and the uncircumcised kneel and bow their heads respectfully at the passing of the idol, which is hidden from profane view by a dirty cloth covering.

778 The boli of the second group are legion, and it is very difficult to know all of them. The main two are the Tji wara and the Douga.

A Tji wara seldom gives evidence of its power. Although it may kill its owner or anyone who happens to separate the male from the female in the course of the sacred dance, a Negro is seldom heard to blame it for the death of one of his family. This fetish is made of two forked sticks, one male and the other female, on which sacrifices are made. It may be seen hanging in the entry hut of its master, along with its cloak of false-cedar bark and its mask which are used in the sacred dance.

778 The mask of the Tji wara is tastefully made; in fact, it is the
532 best Bambara sculpture I have seen. It is carved of the wood of the dondol (Bombax cornui) and seems intended to represent a goat or a deer. The male often has curved horns and sometimes measures almost a meter in height. The female is smaller, its horns are straight, rings hang from its nose and ears and, no doubt because a goddess could not be sterile, it carries its child on its back. (1) During the

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1. It is easy to obtain a mask of the tji wara. Many colonials bring them back from the Sudan, but they are mistaken in speaking of it as a "Sudanese fetish." This mask and all the other masks, including the twins' doll, are not "fetishes" at all. They externalize for the Negroes their idea of the genie -- sétané -- which animates the object to which they sacrifice. /Placement of this footnote is editor's emendation, the original gives it on following page 153/.

During the sacred dance the Negroes, decked out in mask and cloak, are bent double and constantly in motion. From time to time they bellow [516] into a bull's horn. Since they cannot stand straight without failing in respect for the idol, they stretch out on the ground or crouch on all fours when they are tired and weary.

778 ●782 At the time of the arrival of the bani-n-kono (storks), a little before the rainy season, a sacrifice of dogs, goats, and hens is offered to the Tji wara. This fetish is especially venerated by youths; they ask it for strength, health, and earnestness in work. Thus, when young people get together to cut shrubs and make a new field in the midst of the bush or to pull out weeds in the winter, a goat is sacrificed; and they work to the sound of the drum and the tji wara bellowing into his horn. Upon their return from the field, the workers are given millet beer; then the sacred dance begins in the public square /145/ and continues far into the night, to the great delight of the women and children.

778 The douga consists of a fairly large number of bulls' horns enclosed in a goatskin. It is hung in the entry hut, and it is there its altar is set; this altar is a square column of earth attached to one of the corners of the room. It often measures a meter in height; the

118 corner that is visible is decorated with horns, and a conari, a receptacle of baked earth, is fastened to the platform to catch the overflow of victims' blood. This receptacle is always surrounded by a little hedge made of porcupine quills, which gives the whole arrangement a somewhat fancy appearance.

118 More terrible than the tji wara, it is popular with some people; 182 the Negroes readily appeal to it when they want to take revenge on an enemy. Nor is it unusual to hear a Bambara blame if for the death of one of his family, and since several victims are offered whenever such situations and occasions arise, it receives a good sprinkling of blood from here and there. A great sacrifice is made to it annually, and on the assigned day dogs, goats, and hens are offered to it. Following the sacrifice, the initiates meet at the home of one or another of the most influential members of the sect, and the day is spent emptying jugs of millet beer and getting drunk.

The specialty of the douga is to protect people from snake bites. Nevertheless the Bambara sacrifice to it to some extent for everything. From it, as from the others, they ask for wealth, wives, rain in the winter, etc., etc. (2).

> 2. In every sacrifice there is the sacramental consumption of part of the meat and objects offered to the idol. These present partake of this communion at the actual site of the sacrifice and without any seasoning whatever.

118 Many other /boli in this category/ could be mentioned; for example, there is the da, to which the Bambara sacrifice in order to have a good harvest. But, although these are terrible, they are still not the boli which they really fear and dread and to which /146/ they sacrifice continuously throught their lives. The latter form a separate group; they have temples and sacred groves, nothing is done without them, and they are always being taken out of their stinking dens and filthy temples. Men, women -- everybody worships and consults

778 with the dancers /150/ who, with torsos naked to the waist, gesticulate and shout their sacred songs to the sound of drums and pipes:

778 539 A djigina so, gnâ, ma fambali, a djigina so, tjon k'a e.
He is our guest, the gnâ, great killer of men, he is our guest tjon k'a é.
A fiéréla ka dén, boli fiéréla ka dén.
He has blossomed to bear, to bear his fruits; this boli has blossomed, he has his fruit.
Soubaou, yo, nin kéra malo ko ye.
Souba, yo, this is done because of shame.
Soubaya kéra, dabali bé an ko yé.
Someone has devoted himself to the practices of the souba, we have a means of saving ourselves.

778 782 Nor does sacrifice to the Nama fail to be impressive. Only members of the staff enter the enclosure where the beehive used as its tabernacle is located. The crowd of members remains outside, and no one approaches the palisade before it is his turn to give a sacrificial hen and kola nuts to the sacrificer. While the idol is being reddened with blood (1), /151/ two men, naked to the waist and facing the

778 171 1. The Nama of the Malinké is absolutely identical with that of their Bambara brothers. At Bendougouba, a village of the Kosilanbougou culture near Kita, there is a Nama, and one can identify the words as they are very nearly the same.

Bambara	Malinké
Male Nama: Tjema	Male Nama: Kema
Female Nama: Mousoma	Female Nama: Mousoma
The Nama protects chiefly against initiates of the siri, who are said to eat human flesh and are called souba.	The Nama protects against the soubaga, identical with the souba. It comes from Misèngo in Bélédougou.

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The Nama comes from Misango, a province of Bélédougou.

The Nama is sometimes called Souyakoro, Namakoro, and its diamou, or lineal name, is Sirima-n-fign.

The palisade around the Nama is called djasé; the receptacle for the blood, da.

The horned pieces of wood are called wara se and gnê bla, djenfa mousoou, djenfa tjeou, sometimes called waraou.

The master of the Nama at Misango, which is father of all /Nama/ is at present Tjema-n-djan; out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba.

There are three names for one and the same thing, say the Negroes of Kita: Souyakoro, Namakoro, and Sirimafing.

The palisade is called djasa; the receptacle, daga.

The horned pieces of wood are called gnâ bla and ko bla Wara, or Waradjeli or gnâ Wara.

Out of respect all masters of the Nama of Misango are called Foura tigiba (foura, "medicine"; tigiba, "great master").

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crowd, stand immobile on each side of the sacrificer and hold in their hands two pieces of wood about a meter long on which are tied three rams' horns (wara se) and two horns /sic/ (gné bla). It is an honor, even a distinction, to hold these horned pieces of wood, and these men are called djenfa tjéou.

Two annual sacrifices are offered to the boli of this group: one before the rainy season when, the Negroes say, the male and female idols mate, and the other about three months later, a little before harvesting begins when the grain is almost ripe. This is the time when the female idols give birth to their offspring, the best time to buy fetishes and to have fourou and konio made, because, as I said

before, whoever wants to own a boli must unite with it in as close a bond as if he were contracting a fourou marriage. In order to seal this union he must offer kola nuts, fourou gosi (1), to the village head and

1. The tribute which every man must pay if he wishes to enjoy his marriage legitimately.

the elders, in short, have a wedding (konio).

Women, uncircumcised men, and the uninitiated are never present at the sacrifices and festivals in honor of the fetishes of which I speak. However, I have seen women summoned to clap their hands and sing the praises of the Komo or the Kono. On the nights of the festivals they stay inside the village, and paths leading to the square where they are gathered are closed with kara, or coarse mats. Near them they hear the roar of trumpets and horns, and from time to time, above the mats, the silhouette of a hideous mask appears in sight and freezes them with fear and terrifies them, but in the dark of the night they cannot see details and are not able to say what they have seen. When the Nama is brought out (2), the women are summoned at day-

2. The phrase "to bring out the Nama" is my translation for the Bambara expression, Nama bora, which means that a sacrifice to the idol has been made, and that the night is spent in shouting and dancing the sacred dances. The Negroes also have the expression, a djigina so, "he came to visit us at home," (a djigina, ("he visited us at"...; so, "our home"). These expressions are used in relation to all boli.

break at the moment when the god is put back into his beehive, and

778 /152/ at the foot of the tree under which the initiates shouted and
782 danced all night, they are shown the siri found by the djenfa tjéou (1)
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1. Djenfa tjeou: those who run with heads of the Nama.

and the darotigi, or darotala (2). While these siri (3) are burned, the

2. Darotigi, or darotala: he who rings the bell and precedes the djenfa tjéou with a lantern.

[754]

3. The siri are sacred objects which initiates of siri, the souba, throw here and there in the environs of the village in order to cast evil spells and sorcery on persons to whom they wish harm. Every time the Nama is brought out 20 to 40 siri are found. These small amulets /sic/, made of a little of everything, including trouser buttons, hooks, and belt buckles, tremble and moan while the women watch them. I have been present several times at this performance but have never perceived these tremblings and moanings, doubtless because I am not a Negro.

women dance and sing the praises of the idol.

778 The boli have two days of rest a week, Monday and Thursday
782 (4). It is nevertheless permissible to sacrifice to them on these days,

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4. They rest in the sense that a festival at which they preside, e.g., a circumcision, never takes place on those days.

T18 and on Sunday evening (tné sou, "the night of Monday"), the initiates
T82 of the Komo like to go out or, if you like, dance their dances and
shout their sacred hymns. Since the boli preside at all important events of life, circumcisions, marriages, deaths, etc., I will speak of the admission to the sects of these fetishes and the sacrifices offered to them when I discuss these matters. I will say, however, before closing this paragraph, that at no time or season does a village let a week go by without offering a sacrifice to the great boli which they own or dancing their dances. The staff of these fetishes is feared, dreaded, respected, and honored, and on days of celebration their owners are in the place of honor and sit next to the gnéna-n-sonnaba (religious head of a village), or at least next to the sotigi (civil head).

T18 In addition to the formal sacrifices at which the initiates are
T82 present, the great boli receive homage, tribute, and great streams of
695 blood from individuals: appeals for their intervention are made constantly. Over a mere nothing an oath on such a fetish -- called kali boli la (5) is required, and if a dispute arises between two families,

5. There is a slight difference between kali boli la and boli sien. To take the oath called kali boli la is to swear on the fetish that one is telling the truth, that one is innocent. Only the accuser sacrifices. Seven straws must be fastened onto the object called sirikoun, and the accused, blara boli koro, is placed under the boli -- his life is placed in its hands -- and is to die if he has lied. In performing the boli sien, the accuser and the accused both sacrifice. Here again seven straws are fastened onto the sirikoun, and the accused is placed in the fetish's power twice;

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first by the accuser and a second time of his own accord (a blara boli koro, "the accuser places him under the boli"; a y'i bla boli koro, "the accused has placed himself under the fetish").

a boli sien (5) is needed, for the fetish must again be called on to be

/See footnote 5 immediately preceding./

a witness. /153/ These oaths entail heavy expenses, for one hen is seldom enough and a goat is very often necessary. I have seen four or five dogs, equal to an expenditure of 20 to 30 francs, sacrificed over a trivial matter.

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The three chief sacrifices offered by individuals are the fani-nké (1), the gnénama fani (2), and the sou fani (3). The first is made

1. Fani, "small throat cutting"; ké, "to make."

2. Gnénama, "one who has life," "alive."

3. Sou, "corpse."

to obtain a favor, to place oneself in the good graces of the fetish; the second, to preserve one's life, to escape a death already decreed; and the third is offered to appease a fetish whom one blames for the death of a relative (4) and to entreat it to spare the survivors of the

[74]

4. Eighty times out of 100, without exaggeration, death is blamed on a boli fetish.

778 family.

782 At the end of every important sacrifice, all the objects which make up the fetish are washed in the blood that has collected in the earthen receptacles called da, and it is not until after this operation, performed in the deepest silence, that the objects are replaced in their goatskins.

778 55/ Negroes like to give the name of the fetish to children born at times of great sacrifices. I would even say that in studying the "names of people" one learns to know the gnâ, or boli, the gnéna, or djiné, and becomes initiated into the usages and customs of the country.

Names of children dedicated to the Komo, the most popular in the district of Ségou: Boli, boli ba, Néné, Nono, Négé son (or Négi son) (5), Togo-ba-tjé (6). /154/

5. Négi son: sacrifice to iron. Sometimes the word Komo is left unspoken out of respect, and the child is designated by one of the pieces of the fetish. The objects mentioned in the case of the Komo are three iron tubes (négi), sometimes called Komo djoloko ("chains of the Komo") in the presence of the uninitiated. The tube used as a trumpet is called tama guengueba.

6. Togo, "name"; ba, "big"; tjé, "man," etc.

Names of children dedicated to the Nama, the most important fetish after the Komo: Djasé, Sirima, Namakoro, Nama (1).

1. Djasé, the palisade which surrounds the sanctuary of the Nama. Sirimafign is the diamou, or family or lineal name, of the Nama.

843 but is lost after the first months -- something that is inexplicable to her. To avoid this misfortune she covers herself with grigris and talismans; she wears them on her neck, on her hips, down her breasts, on her arms. One in particular I cannot silently pass over; it is the tafo, a narrow leather thong held in the skin of a monkey's hand and knotted sometimes around the wrist and sometimes above the biceps.

842 843 782 778 A sterile woman or one subject to accidents during her pregnancies appeals to the Komo, Kono, or Nama boli fetishes, but more often to the gnena, or djine, fetishes, and above all to the dasiri fetish, the genie protector of the village. Through the intermediary of the priest, the gnena-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, she offers it hens, kola nuts, and dégé, or millet flour mixed with water. She dedicates and consecrates the fruit of her womb to the dasiri and swears an oath to offer a sacrifice worthy of it if she succeeds in carrying her child to full term.

842 843 782 778 825 I should reiterate in passing that the dasiri gnéna is not, as one might suppose, constantly sitting down or astride of a /167/ leafy branch or, if you like, enclosed in a tree trunk with bark as a fitted jacket. It walks around, readily leaves the tree, the spring, or the rock which it uses as dwelling, home, or resting place; it visits its relatives and close friends, it carouses with its companions every time a drinking bout is held in honor of one of them, and when there are no parties, it takes advantage of its freedom. It is afraid of walking with its feet on the ground, so for its romantic excursions in and around the village, it straddles its mount, which is a snake, a lizard, or a donkey, but usually, as we already know, a terrible billy goat. It is this animal, especially, that the sterile woman showers with her attentions; she often goes far into the bush to fetch a handful of tender grass which is its delicacy, and every day measures of millet and maize bran are set aside for it. When she becomes a mother, she overflows with sacrifices and acts of thanksgiving, and her child receives the name of the fetish. He will be djiriba, gnénama, or gnénamaké, as I have already said in the paragraph in which I discussed the dasiri, who is the genie protector of the village and the first of the gnéna.

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rallying cry, bellowed by a hundred throats, "kou kou kou, ke ke ke"; drums roll, and drunken voices shout:

T'an ta bara ladjé.
Stop, let us go and see the gourd (of beer).
Bara ma dja an na,
When the beer has made us joyful (1),

1. Dja, "to make happy," "to please," "to be agreeable," "to make joyful."

An na youyouba yougouba.
We will dance and dance (2).

2. Yougouba, "to dance with a shaking of the whole body."

Gnâ tigi, né ka nougouni-n-ko min yé?
Master of the gnâ, what has happened to my (hen's) entrails? (3)

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3. This line recalls a peculiarity of the sacrifice of the newly initiated. With one twist of the finger the sacrificer takes the entrails out of the hen, and when the young initiate wants to draw it, he is quite surprised to find that none of the viscera are in it any more.

Gnâ tigi do nougou na bo gnouan yé.
A master of the gnâ (kodit) the entrails will come out together.

Excited, or rather irritated, by the wait, the circumcised boys get up, move forward in a line, and prostrate themselves before the god's escort, the one who shakes without any rest under his cloak of feathers and brings resounding blasts from his horned tube (4), and

4: Henry--237 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

2. No Sacrifice to the Shades of the Dead

764 782 At every death the blood of hens, goats, and dogs flows in streams. I would like to be able to think and say with some Europeans that all these sacrifices are an honor paid to the shades of the deceased and the ancestors, but that is impossible for me. Not the slightest sacrifice is offered to a person's soul on the day of death or the day of burial. The Negroes are logical in their beliefs; the soul does not leave the body until after burial, and a dead person has no right to a sacrifice until he is in Lahara, or the world of spirits. Prayers are undoubtedly said. Objects which belonged to the deceased or were used in paying the final respects to him are destroyed and placed as saraka at the corner of land formed by paths that cross. But nothing in all this would be a sacrifice, bloody or bloodless in Bambara eyes (1).

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1. Very rarely, a dead person is thought to have caused a Negro's death. If the sorcerer asserts that a deceased individual is the cause of a death, a sacrifice is made to him, but it is made to quiet him because he is a murderer, and not at all because he is dead.

764 782 761 And to whom are they directed, all these hecatombs and streams of blood? I already said, in the chapter where I discussed sickness and death, that a Bambara never dies a natural death. Always he is the victim of poison, of a gnâma or of a djiné, or -- 80 times out of 100 -- a powerful fetish, such as a Komo, Kono, Nama, Nia, or Douga, has caused him to perish. At every death one or another of the following expressions is on all lips: "Souba ta no do, that is the way the souba act"; -- "keroti kér'a la, the poison of the fetishes was thrown at him"; -- "dounkono dir'a ma, he has been given poison"; -- "Komo, Kono, or Nama, etc., sera a ma, the Komo, Kono, or /216/ Nama

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762 has reached him"; -- "djinéou no do, the djiné are the cause of it";
761 -- "a fa gnâma do, it is his father's gnâma"; -- "boli y'a fa, a boli killed him."

Thus, all the sacrifices which are made on the occasion of a death are directed to the fetishes which are thought to be murderers, and if a deceased member of the family or of a family of strangers gets a slight trickle of blood, that is because on the word of a sorcerer he is guilty. When it is thought that the deceased was the victim of poured poison (dounkono) or korti (poison of the fetishes), thrown sorcery, there is recourse to the diviners and sorcerers to ascertain what invisible being must be soothed and what sacrifice should be uttered. If a gnâma is involved, a sacrifice to a fetish is often prescribed to ensure its protection, but to the gnâma itself a plain saraka, with or without bloodshed, is offered. These saraka are seldom made to the Supreme Being Alla; they are offered to the lesser djiné genii that run around the village and like to rest in the da-n-koun in among the gnâma.

3. Respects Paid to the Uncircumcised

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[304] Few honors are rendered at death to the uncircumcised and unexcised; such persons are not really Bambara, for they lack the tribal mark. The head of the village and his council ascertain that the death has occurred and, depending on the order received from the diviners, a sacrifice is offered or a saraka placed. The people of the village come to offer their condolences to the bereaved family, and when the grave has been dug, two or three youths bury the corpse without further ceremony.

The father wears mourning for a whole day, and for at least three days the mother grieves in her hut with a few women friends, her neighbors. A barbaric custom also decrees that if the deceased is an unweaned infant its big toe must be broken, in the presence of its mother, and many fathers do more. They mark it with a knife on the forehead, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the arms; they cut the upper lip or the lobe of an ear. This procedure always makes a deep impression on a mother, especially if she has given birth when

764 This ceremony, as beautiful as it is touching, ends with this prayer: "Give us rain when winter comes, give us a plentiful harvest, a vigorous old age, children and wives, and give us prosperity." [483] Four strong fellows then come and take the corpse on their shoulders and, preceded by children and grandchildren who shout and cry, they carry it to the cemetery at almost a run, and the whole crowd follows them (1). The men line up around the grave, the women place them-

1. In Bani country I have seen the spear of the deceased carried with great ceremony. The oldest son from time to time threw a few cowrie shells onto the corpse, and the crowd rushed to get them. This djansa is seldom performed, and the custom is not at all general.

selves behind them, and the sons of the deceased go down into the grave. They undo the mat, take their father in their arms, and lay him in the niche on his right side, facing east. Then they tear a little of the shroud, or white blouse, of the buried man, and one of those present takes the strip torn off and holds it outside of the grave. [417] The children build an arch above the corpse out of small boards that are sometimes worked and colored, but most frequently out of wood chips (faléma) or large slabs of earth dried in the sun. While they are building, the youths mix mortar to stop up the cracks and thoroughly coat the whole structure. The women clap their hands and then sing in low tones to the sound of the drums.

764 782 When the work is done, the children come out of the grave, and the person in charge of the funeral ceremony comes forward, on his shoulder a hoe with the blade hafted in reverse and in his hand a gourd of water. He leans over the grave. The drums stop beating, the women are silent, and he pours water on the head of the buried man three times, saying: "See /221/ this water, do not be angry, forgive us, give us rain in winter and a plentiful harvest (1). Whether

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1. In the eyes of the Negroes this ceremony is not a bloodless sacrifice but a simple prayer; and the water is poured to give the words greater emphasis, since in their eyes it is the element without which nothing lives nor can live.

the wind blows from the west or the east, from the north or the south, may it be favorable to us. Give us a long life, many descendants, wives and prosperity." The audience answers, "Amina -- o dé ka ké (let it be so)," and, using hoes hafted in reverse so that the curve of the blade is on the outside, the youths fill the grave. The drums beat again, and the women clap their hands and improvise a song whose words usually can be reduced to these: "Our father is dead, we have been told he is dead. But he will come back! Young men, fill the grave well, so that no souba, no hyena, nor any wild animal can take away the corpse."

764 When the grave is filled, the one who is holding the strip of cloth attached to the blouse, or the shroud, of the deceased pulls it toward him until it tears and remains in his hands. This ribbon is a [151] precious relic of which tafo are made; they are a protection from a host of evils, especially throat ailments and gnâma. The coarse mat (tjékala or kara) which was the bed or the seat of the deceased, quite often together with his shoes and the small earthen pot that was his wash basin, are laid on the tomb. If the deceased was a woman, pieces of a gourd, fragments of a hearth, or the stick for stirring gruel (to-n-galama) are thrown onto the tomb instead of the wash basin. The pliant mat in which the corpse was wrapped is often given to a friend. The latter goes and burns it outside the village, or before entering his own village if he is a foreigner; he says: "Here is a mat on which no one will die from now on."

[777] Wednesday and Saturday are two unlucky days. On these days 764 strangers never present their condolences to the bereaved family, and 782 if a burial takes place, a small white chicken is killed and given to the deceased so that he can placate the spirits as soon as the grave

764 has been filled and his soul goes to Lahara. In the eyes of the Negroes,
782 this act has none of the attributes of a sacrifice; it is the price of the right to enter Lahara and is given by the children to /222/ their father's soul. Moreover, they give it to him alive, and it is slipped into the grave at the moment when the last small board, the last wood chip, or the last earthen slab making up the root is set in place (1).

1. A nest egg is slipped in instead of a hen if the deceased was a woman.

764 At the end of the ceremony the deceased's dog is killed (2),

[231]

2. If the deceased owned a dog it is always killed unless the old man decided otherwise while he was alive. There are Bambara, especially women, who raise dogs in order to have this honor, and for this reason only.

and the sons-in-law and the brothers-in-law eat to, or millet gruel.
[431] When they depart they also receive a rooster or a hen. It is given them in the name of the deceased, and since it is the gift of a dead person, they kill and eat it on the way (3). The fetishes and the genii

[782]

3. This practice, again, is no sacrifice in the eyes of the Negro.

would be displeased if such a gift should arrive in the village alive, and whoever became guilty of such a crime would become the plaything of most of the gnâma and could dig his grave.

The Bambara do not place any kind of food either on or in the grave. But for three days in the evening, at nightfall, a dish of tô (gruel) and a little fresh water is placed on the goua so that the soul of the old man may satisfy his hunger and quench his thirst.

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causing her own child to die. A mother who has lost her child may adopt an orphan and give it her breast.

766 crowd /226/ always withdraws, and the blacksmith remains alone
845 with his assistant. When the work is done, they wash their hands on the grave itself, and the operator makes the customary prayer: "Whether the wind comes from the east or the west, from the north or the south, etc.," (see above, p. 244).

5. Sacrifices to Fetishes on the Occasion of a Death

782 Although at the time of death there is no sacrifice to the soul
764 of the deceased nor to the shades of ancestors, blood flows never-
778 less. It even flows in torrents for the Bambara are not satisfied with reddening the family boli; they stain with blood all the boli fetishes they believe to be guilty. Nor do initiates of the sects forget their deceased brothers, and for a friend who was initiated the same day as they themselves, they cannot refuse the boli a hen and a kola nut. If the deceased is the master of a fetish, its priest, or an influential person on its staff, all the initiates comply, and the sacrifice becomes general. The initiates do more; in the evening they take the god out of its temple, and all night long they mingle their wild animal shouts with the blasts of sacred horns and trumpets blown by heralds. The latter very often wear hideous horned masks on their heads and are dressed in cloaks of feathers.

761 Eighty times out of a hundred, death is attributed to a powerful
782 boli which is taking vengeance, punishing or rewarding, and in the
764 environs of Ségou the Komo, Nia, Kono, Nama, and Douga are the
778 ones who have the most deaths to their credit. When the murdering boli is known, the entire village is notified; the trousers, blouse and bed cover of the deceased, or the tafé (1) if it is a woman, are hung

1. Tafé: a rectangular piece of cloth which women wind around their bodies to cover themselves.

761 on the branches of the sacred tree under which the fetish dwells and
782 at the door of its temple, and the members of its staff know how to
764 extol their god. Under these conditions they are without pity; they
778 bleed the bereaved family white, so that the tax demanded by our circle officers (2) is nothing compared to the tax that they have to

[651]

2. The head tax is 3. 50 francs per person and 5 francs for the servants of Europeans. Here France is surely not a "tyrant, " but a tender mother.

pay. /227/

782 What do they not have to give for a sacrifice to the Komo, for
764 example? The whole house is turned upside down to find goats, dogs,
[824] kola nuts, roosters, and hens, gnâma-n-kou (Amormum melegueta), and djalakouma (a plant whose name I do not know). The family needs all this, cost what it may, and if they have to buy it all they have to pay double or triple the value of the objects, for others make profits from their necessity. First a dog or a goat is sacrificed to appease the fetish and pay respects to it. Then to find out whether it is satisfied and its hatred assuaged, two red roosters and two hens with golden necks bite the dust. A bara (1) (gourd) full of gnâma-n-

[415 824]

1. This bara (a large pumpkin /courge/ with a small opening at the top) can hold from 18 to 20 liters of liquid. The true gourd is half of a pumpkin.

kou fruit and another full of djalakouma are offered. One portion of these fruits is used for holy water (2); the other is sold for the benefit

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2. The holy water of the Komo is made of roots and leaves of the djalakouma and the fruit of the

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gnâma-n-kou or the na-yanka (I do not know the name of this plant), put to boil and soak in water. To make it effective, at least two kola nuts are offered to the fetish and five hens are sacrificed to it.

782 of the staff, which lives off the altar. For the mere act of having
764 killed a dog or a goat, of which they receive a good share of the meat, they get a fee consisting of a basket of sorghum (18 to 20 kilograms) and 1, 600 cowrie shells (about 2 francs).

Since initiates of the fetish are the only ones who can touch the corpse and lay it in its final home, they receive 8, 000 to 10, 000 cowrie shells (about 8 to 10 francs) on that score. At the end of the sangafo (3) the god's retinue go and sweep the hut of the deceased,

3. Sangafo, to go and offer condolences to the relatives of a deceased."

purify it with holy water, and drive out the last gnâma of the murdering Komo, and for this five fine hens are slaughtered. As payment for their trouble, the family also gives them five to six meters of cloth and 8 to 10 ba (4) (about 8 to 10 francs); 50 francs do not cover

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4. A ba is worth 800 cowrie shells or about 1 franc. (The Bambara count by 40 and 80, and not by 50 and 100. 40, débé; 80, kémé.)

the cost.

[43] Fortunately, the family does not bear all the expenses. Friends help a little, and everyone brings his offering: from one person they get a /228/ hen, from another a débé (40 cowrie shells) or a kémé (80 cowrie shells). Nevertheless, they bear most of the cost, and
[42] the fetishes are one of the chief reasons for that bonding of children (1)

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1. A bonded person works for his food, just like a slave. His condition is worse than that of the slave, for in addition to his food, the latter receives a bit of cloth to cover himself, but the bonded person does not. A slave can ransom himself for a sum varying between 100 and 200 francs, and at present he can escape without fear of being pursued and without paying anything at all. A bonded person must pay the amount of his bond to the last cowrie shell, whether he escapes or not. There are Negroes who, for a certain amount, will give you one of their children for one or two years. These children are not paid since the amount has already been paid, but besides food they get clothing and some gratuities beyond the payment for their work. Lacking the proper words, the Bambara call this also, "bonding" even though it is basically a real "domestic service." When the agreed time has passed, these young people go back to their homes without any payment being made. Even though the Negroes call this bonding, they make a distinction: a) slavery is a stigma which always remains; b) true bonding is a stigma that does not disappear unless the bonded person himself pays the price of his bonding; c) the bonding which is called "domestic service" does not involve any stigma; they are workers and not menial laborers.

764 which is nothing less than disguised slavery. In the presence of a
782 European the Negroes like to complain that he cannot meet their taxes, but they should not be listened to too closely -- 99 times out of 100 they are lying! Let us not make war against the military or civil official responsible for levying the tax, which is not at all exorbitant; let us think before all about the boli and their staffs, a band of persons without principles or law, human vultures with greedy fingers who attack the weak, the widows and orphans, terrify them with their threats of death. They do not leave these people in peace until they have taken everything: hens, goats, dogs, cowrie shells, sorghum, and often freedom.

6. Respects Paid to Initiates of the Koré, or Koté

794 The initiates of a fetish are never indifferent to the death of a
766 brother, and they hasten to find a hen and a kola nut with which to prove their attachment to the deceased and to assuage the wrath of the god. The sect of koré does things in a grand, even in a ceremonious, manner, if there is any ceremony in those nocturnal orgies where d'lo, or millet beer, is drunk to /229/ the point of senselessness, and where lascivious and obscene dances are danced.

When a young man who is koré dé (son of koré, initiate of the
[778] sect) dies, relatives and friends redden with blood the sacred tree and the kara, a perforated board painted red and white, which is the genie's emblem. Although there is general mourning in the village, tears are dried when evening comes, and for three nights there is nameless
[785] bedlam and endless shouting in the kore tou (the sacred grove) as initiates flagellate themselves, burn their backs with torches, tear their bodies with thorns, abandon themselves to their barbaric dances,
[534] and lose themselves in lewd gestures in front of the dénouba (drums measuring from one to one and a half meters) and the kingé (a triangle, an iron tube, which is hung from the thumb of the left hand and which is struck with a ring or an iron nail placed on the little finger).

For the old people who are granted not a tear nor a regret but for whom there are dances and songs, fellow initiates come in large numbers, and during the night preceding the burial, they make a

766 The victim of a boli may also become for the village and the region an impure, base creature that has lived all too long. This happens when the murdering, or supposedly murdering, fetish three times refuses the sacrifices offered to appease it (1). When this occurs

1. A sacrifice is not accepted if the hen charged with giving the god's answer dies on its breast with its feet under it, and the kola nut, cut in two, falls on its pulp with the rounded part on top.

the whole family, men, women and children, must still their cries and must not weep, however great their sorrow may be. Family heads abandon themselves to sacrifices, the initiates of the sect do the same, and everybody thanks the boli for having caused the death of a person who deserved only scorn and should never have lived, and begs never to meet such a fate nor to be like him.

766 194 When the grave has been dug (a plain grave without a niche), the men of the murdering boli (2) come and wrap the corpse in a mat.

2. When a boli has killed someone, it is the men of that boli who come to bury him. It is not always a boli of the village, but sometimes from a distance of one, two, or three days' journey, and if the men of that fetish cannot come at once, e. g., if they are elsewhere burying a man killed by the god, people close the door of the hut in which the corpse lies and wait until the gravediggers choose to arrive. I saw the corpse of a blacksmith left like this for four full days. The sorcerers are the ones who name the boli and the village where it is.

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2. The Negroes' great festival is held at the end of Ramadan. They have a second at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The Moslem masters forced them to observe these two festivals, but the Bambara have not adopted a single Moslem rite. They sacrifice to the dasiri, to some djiné genii, and to the dead.

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The great sacrifice to the dead is made at the end of Ramadan and at the festival of the كَبَشْ sheep. The gnéna-n-sonnaba, or dougoutigi, first sacrifices to the b'lon da ba sou (3), those who,

3. Sou, "corpses"; b'lon da ba, "of the great b'lon," the great entry hut giving access to the village.

like themselves, were priests of the dasiri and, in a general way, to all those who had some civil or religious authority in the village. All the members of his council are present at this sacrifice. After the libations of millet flour mixed with water and d'lo, or millet beer, a fine white hen (4) is slaughtered, and sometimes a sheep then, two

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4. In general sacrifices where the whole population or a whole sect participates, the liturgical color is the primary consideration, and a pullet a day old has as much value as a large rooster. When a victim of the liturgical color cannot be obtained, only water, dégé, and the kola nut are offered.

white kola nuts are offered and, if the sacrifice is accepted, a clump of wool or a few feathers are torn from the victim and stuck onto the

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middle of the splash of blood by means of a bit of chewed kola nut. When the general sacrifice has been made, every member of the council offers his white hen and his kola nut.

When the village has paid its respects to the blonda ba sou, the sotigi (heads of quarters) gather the gouatigi (heads of families) under their jurisdiction, and all these people sacrifice as before to the shades of those who were heads of quarters (5). Each family head

> 5. Only hens are slaughtered. There are always libations of dégé (millet flour mixed with water) and of d'lo (beer), and offerings of kola nuts.

then goes back to his home, gathers his children, and sacrifices to the shades of his fathers, to those who, like him, were heads of the family. /234/

The Bambara sacrifice to their ancestors very often; they do so by order of a sorcerer and on any occasions in their lives that are at all important, such as the circumcision or excision of one of their children, a betrothal or a wedding (1), but they do so especially when

> 1. Many Bambara do not sacrifice even on these occasions (circumcision, wedding, betrothal) but prefer to call on the family boli, which they dread more. In the winter everybody sacrifices to the shades of ancestors.

winter comes and the fields are sown. The sacrifices are simple and individual, and only the people of the house are present; just a hen, with a little dégé and a kola nut, comprise the whole expense.

The formula of the sacrifice has no special characteristics. The same ideas are always repeated: "I offer this dégé, this d'lo, and this hen; it is a sacrifice that I make to you in my name and in the name of my children. Preserve us from the souba, from sorcery, and from evil-doers. Favor us, preserve us from sickness, give us wives and healthy children, cause us to have rain in the winter, health to work our fields, and a fine harvest."

4: Henry--263 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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The sacrifice to the dead is most often made on the doorsill of the entry hut, and a splash of blood is spread on the wall on each side of the door, about a meter and half from the ground. Many families also have an altar for sacrificing to the dead in their main b'lon; it is the kârâ, an earthen bas-relief depicting a man and a woman. It is all crudely made and has no human qualities about it. Nevertheless, one can guess what the Negroes wanted to depict, for although the woman is without mouth, ears, nose, or eyes, just like her mate, she is always adorned with two fine breasts.

4: Henry--272 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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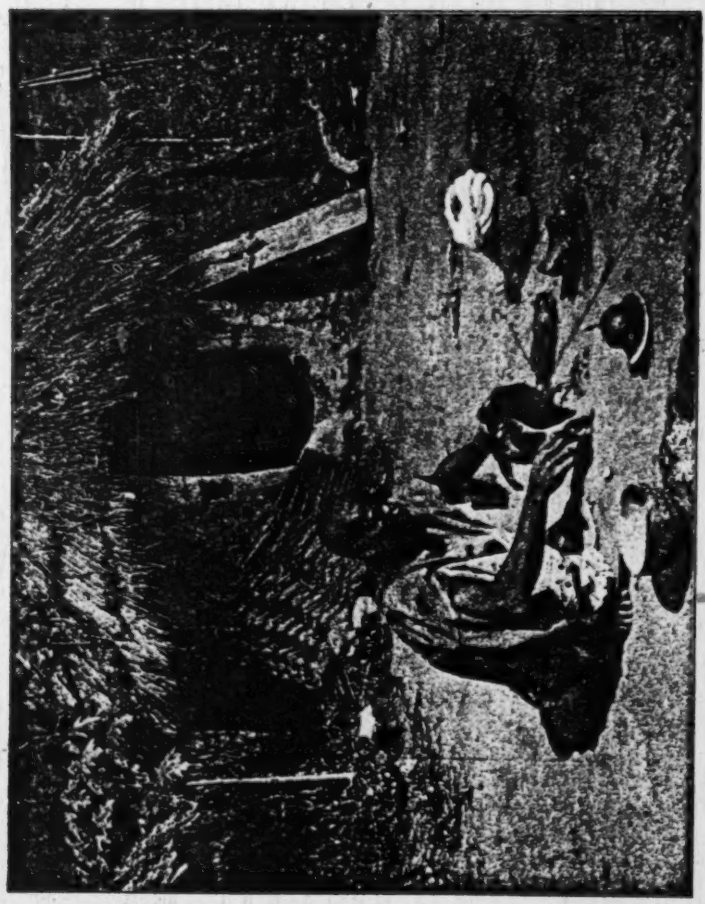

Sacrifice of a hen to the "family boli."

4: Henry--286 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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Bambara burial.
The last prayer

4: Henry--287 M-5 (ca. 1900) 1910 FA8 Bambara FA8

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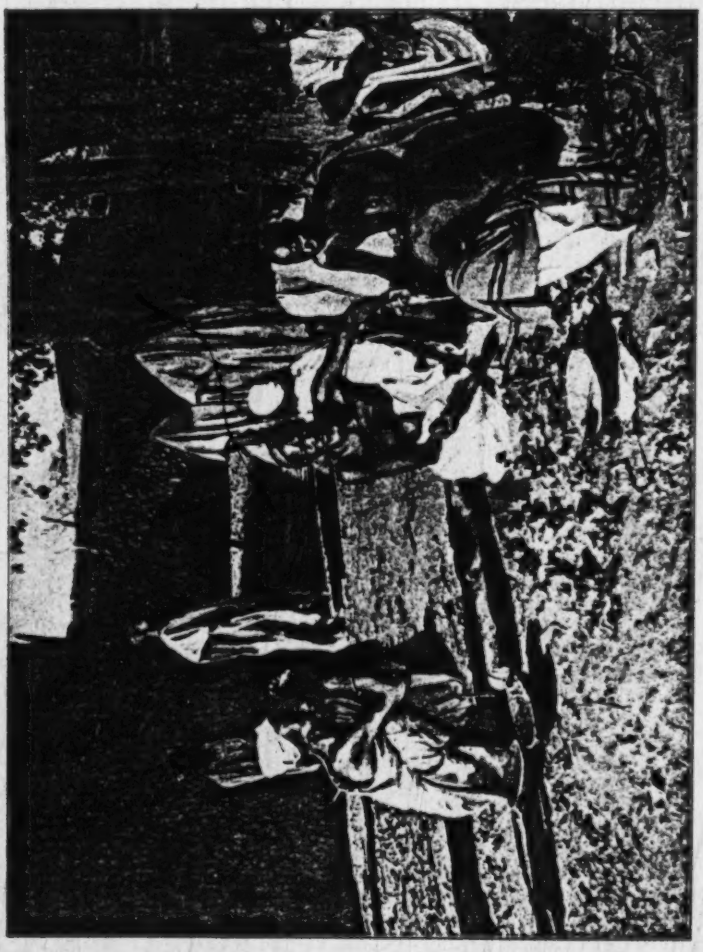

After the sacrifice: division of the sacred meats.